

Saskatchewan's independent news magazine

BRIARPATCH

Volume 25, Number 8

October 1995

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CUTS

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UNDERFUNDING
EDUCATION IS
CHILD NEGLECT

ADULT LEARNERS
BECOME
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WHAT'S
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PROTECTING
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Stop
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cuts!

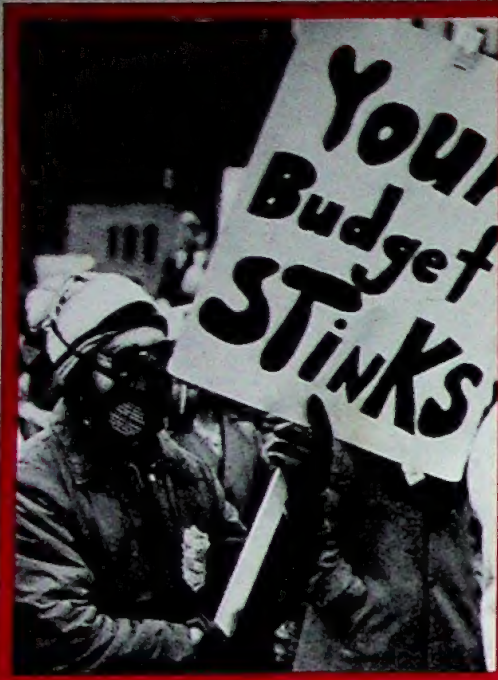
STRATEGIES of
RESISTANCE
by LABOUR

ADULT LEARNERS
BECOME
ADULT EARNERS

THESE
CUTS V

WE
SUCKS

Students



Creating a People's Budget

The Saskatchewan Coalition for Social Justice and other organizations concerned about social justice issues are holding a two-day workshop on alternative budgets. The workshop will act as a focus for looking at how governments spend and should spend, and how they collect and should collect revenue. The goal

is to make economic issues understandable to everyone and to encourage and increase community involvement around such issues. Learn how ordinary people can help governments get priorities straight. Learn how to create a budget that meets peoples' real needs.

The workshop will be held on November 2 & 3, 1996 at the Albert Community Centre, 610 Clarence Ave. South, in Saskatoon. Guest speakers include Eugene Kostyra (former Manitoba finance minister and participant in the Alternative Federal Budget), as well as other representatives of the Manitoba CHO!CES! Social Justice Coalition. More detailed registration pamphlets will be provided soon, and everyone is encouraged to register early. The event is wheelchair accessible and daycare and lunch will be provided. For more information call (306) 933-4141 or write to "Alternative Budget School," c/o CUSO

Saskatchewan, 614-B-10th St. E., Saskatoon, SK S7H 0G9 or e-mail: haiven@sask.usask.ca

Saskatchewan Labour History Book

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour is marking its 40th anniversary by publishing a Saskatchewan Labour History Book. It

will recount the story of Saskatchewan workers and their organizations from the period prior to European immigration to the present. In order to complete this project, the SFL needs financial assistance. Please send donations made out to: SFL History Project. The SFL also welcomes suggestions and advice on the content of the book and will consider photographs and other historical material for publication. For more information contact Garnet Dishaw, SFL, 103-2709-12th Ave., Regina, SK S4T 1J3, phone (306) 525-0197 or fax (306) 525-8960.

Student Week of Action

The Canadian Federation of Students is organizing a Pan-Canadian Week of Action from October 21-25 to protest tuition hikes and social program cut-backs across the country. To get involved, contact



the CFS component at your campus. At the University of Regina, students will be on strike on October 21. For more information contact Marjorie Brown, CFS-Saskatchewan Component, Room 107, Student Union Building, U of R, Regina, SK S4S 0A2. Phone (306) 586-8811; fax (306) 586-8812; e-mail cfs@ursu.uregina.ca

Fishers Merge

The B.C.-based United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union (UFAWU) has been hurt in recent years by collapsing fisheries and U.S. intrusions into the Canadian fishery. After discussing to merge with CAW-Canada for two years, the 5,000 UFAWU members voted 95 percent in favour of merging with the 205,000-member CAW. UFAWU president John Radosevic said, "The merger will enable us to maintain the independence that we've always had but have the backing of the largest private sector union in the country."

Hear the Reply of the authorities to
Strikers' Delegation requesting im-
mediate Relief and opening of negotiations on
counter-proposals to Bennett Government's offer
of Concentration Camps

MASS MEETING TONIGHT

Market Square 8 p.m.

(If wet will be held in Stadium)

Several Speakers representing local organisations
will address the crowd

Winnipeg Strike Camp situation will be outlined.
Latest developments will be given

Strikers' Funds are Completely Depleted

Support the Strikers and Force the authorities to grant immediate Relief



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Hamilton Day of Protest, February 1996.
photo: Photo Features Ltd., courtesy CAW-Canada

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The ethics of being an ethical conserver. Where you spend your money is just as important as how you earn it.

Briarpatch is Saskatchewan's independent alternative newsmagazine committed to building a socialist democratic society. We provide an open forum for disadvantaged peoples and support progressive movements working to change unjust structures and build a genuine political and economic democracy. We support peace, equality, democracy, social justice, Aboriginal self-determination, and the protection of the environment. We oppose the oppression of people on the basis of nation, class, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation. *Briarpatch* magazine was founded in 1973 and is published ten times a year by Briarpatch Inc., an independent non-profit organization. Many of the articles and photographs in *Briarpatch* are contributed by volunteers. Deadline for the receipt of articles is 45 days preceding publication. Unsolicited contributions will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Briarpatch board of directors or staff. Articles may be reproduced provided proper credits are given. *Briarpatch* is a member of the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association and the staff are members of RWDSU Local 568. The Briarpatch office is at Huston House, 2138 McIntyre Street, Regina, S4P 2R7. Phone (306) 525-2949. One year subscription: \$24.61. Unions & institutions: \$35.31. Publications Mail Registration No. 4171. ISSN 0703-8968. Membership in Briarpatch Inc. is open to groups or individuals upon application and payment of a \$1.00 membership fee. *Briarpatch* is indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index and Alternative Press Index and available on microform from Micromedia, 20 Victoria Street, Toronto, ON, M5C 2N8 and from the Underground Press Collection, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI, 48106-1346, U.S.A.

The Labour Issue

Briarpatch is pleased to produce this special issue on strategies of resistance by labour. Thousands of extra copies of this special issue have been distributed among trade unionists across the country. We welcome our new readers and encourage you to subscribe.

We would like to thank the coordinators of this special issue:

Phil Johnson	Guy Marsden
Aina Kagis	Adriane Paavo
Victor Lau	Clare Powell
George Manz	Cheryl Stadnichuk

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CAW-Canada Local 3014, New Westminster, BC
CAW-Canada Local 4401 - Canadian Maritime Union, Thorold, ON
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CUPE Local 1904, Yorkton, SK
CUPE Saskatchewan Division
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP)
CEP National Office, Ottawa, ON
CEP Local 2-S, Saskatoon, SK
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Independent Union Services Union, Regina, SK
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PPWC Local 2, Duncan, BC
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RWDSU Local 454, Regina, SK
RWDSU Local 568, Regina, SK
RWDSU Local 635, Weyburn, SK
RWDSU Local 955, Yorkton, SK
RWDSU Local S-955, Wynyard, SK
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Strategies of Resistance

by Adriane Paavo

The task of labour unions is to improve the quality of life of those who sell their labour for a living. For some unions, achieving this task meant overthrowing capitalism and replacing the exploitation of workers with control by and for workers.

Most unions in the latter half of this century have, however, seen their goal's fulfillment in taming capitalism's worst effects and harnessing its riches to benefit workers too. But over the years, corporations, their leaders, and their governments have become ever less willing to be checked by labour's rein.

Briarpatch has reported on the breakdown of the social democratic social contract in Canada, from the CHST to corporate re-engineering. New challenges require new strategies, and this special labour issue of *Briarpatch* brings you examples of some strategies labour can consider for meeting its goal of improving workers' lives in the 1990s and beyond.

Ed Finn argues in "Unions' Untapped Power" that control of workers' pension funds is a largely unused lever for organized labour to exert economic influence. The pool of \$360 billion in workers' capital could be more ethically invested, rather than being used to finance corporate down-sizing and plant transfers.

In "Labour's Investment Funds," Fred Wilson analyzes the recent growth of using the pooled capital of workers to develop alter-

native investment and community economic development.

Whether through collective bargaining or legislative change, labour can resist job cuts and workplace stress by working to achieve a shorter work week. In "Sharing the Work," Guy Marsden reports that every year since 1945 that unemployment has been below five percent, the federal government recorded a budget surplus. A decrease in unemployment also brings a balance of power back to the bargaining table; more importantly for long-term resistance strategies, job creation benefits labour's allies as much as it does organized labour itself.

Gains at the bargaining table: do they come to one side at the expense of the other or can both sides gain at the same time? Interest-based bargaining says labour and management can both win, even in times of cut backs. Larry Haiven looks at this controversial bargaining strategy in "Interest-based Bargaining."

The global extent of transnational corporations' activities requires new strategies by organized labour, which is to date most effectively structured on a national level. Gerry LeBlanc writes in "International Solidarity" about how unions like the Steelworkers are bringing together workers employed by the same company in different countries. He calls on unions to move beyond visits and exchanges to developing such things as global bargaining strate-

gies.

Strikes and demonstrations have long been tactics favoured by unions. In "Labour's Response Abroad," Phil Johnson looks at recent experiences in France and New Zealand. In France, nationwide strikes against government cuts appear to have given unions new life and greater levels of public support. In New Zealand, the formation of a new political party and changing the electoral system bring more promise of success.

Jonathan Eaton analyzes the recent one-day strikes against the Harris government's legislative agenda. "The Ontario Fightback Campaign" notes that labour and community allies came together to organize the largest demonstrations in Ontario history, but that mutual suspicions and problems with shared decision-making remain.

The labour movement, like the general public, continues to rely on the mainstream media for information to understand ourselves and our world. James Winter argues in "Democracy's Oxygen" that corporate control of the media is cutting off the flow of information and debate needed to educate citizens and promote democracy. Winter sets out several courses of action for labour and community groups to follow.

Adriane Paavo works for the Grain Services Union and is a member of the Briarpatch Editorial Committee.

People before Profits!

While corporate profits and CEO salaries soar, the business class and governments of all political stripes are cutting jobs, social programs are being cut to ribbons, and public services are being privatized.



Now, more than ever, the labour movement needs to build a broad-based movement of workers, the unemployed and social activists to fight back against this cut-throat corporate agenda.



20,000 public employees serving the province

Going down the road

Our provincial highways are in rough shape. And they're getting worse with each passing car, truck and bus.

The government used to give the department of highways enough money to repair the roads. Now there is only enough money to "flag" the bumps. The situation is so bad the highways department estimates it needs another \$40 - \$50 million just to maintain the roads at 1992 levels.

Government neglect of highway maintenance is like driving at night without headlights. Everyone pays the price. The costs include increased damage to vehicles and increased risks to public safety.

The situation can't continue. The Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union is holding public meetings to discuss the condition of the roads and an action plan to save them. We welcome your participation.

Public meetings on highways:

October 21	Shaunavon	October 28	Humboldt
October 22	Weyburn	October 29	Nipawin
October 24	Kindersley	October 30	Prince Albert

For more information contact SGEU at 522-8571 or 1-800-667-5221, extension 206.



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1984, 60 percent of
ized workers were in white-
jobs. By the early 1990s,
proportion had increased to
cent, while the percentage
onized workers in blue-
positions showed a
ponding decline, due
to the substantial loss of
ized jobs in manufacturing
her private sector
ries.

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ain a considerable
tage in hourly wage rates
eir non-unionized
rparts. Unionized workers
\$3.33 more per hour (in
nt 1990 dollars) in 1984.
90, it had risen to \$4.06 an

* The shift of jobs from the goods sector to the service sector caused most of the stagnation of union density. Employment in the goods sector, as a proportion of paid workers, fell from 32 percent to 24 percent from 1976 to 1992, with a corresponding decline of union density from 43 percent to 38 percent.

* In contrast, the service sector experienced major growth, both in terms of total employment - its share rose from 68 percent to 76 percent from 1976 to 1992 - and unionization, which increased from 26 percent to 32 percent over the same period.

* Some 86 percent of unionized workers remain concentrated in four of the nine major industry

Newfoundland has the highest rate, with 53 percent of its work-force unionized, followed by Quebec (39 percent) and British Columbia and Manitoba (both 36 percent). The province with the lowest rate of unionization is Alberta, where only 21 percent of industrial sector workers and 26 percent of service sector workers are in unions.

* The unionization of women has been the most significant demographic change in the composition of union membership over the past 30 years. In 1966, only 16 percent of working women were unionized. By 1993 this figure had nearly doubled to 30 percent of the female work-force and to 45 percent of all unionized workers.

Among full-time employees, the wage disparity between unionized and non-unionized workers was greater for women (\$4.39 an hour in 1990) than for men (\$2.67), at least partly because unionized women tend to be relatively better educated than their non-unionized counterparts.

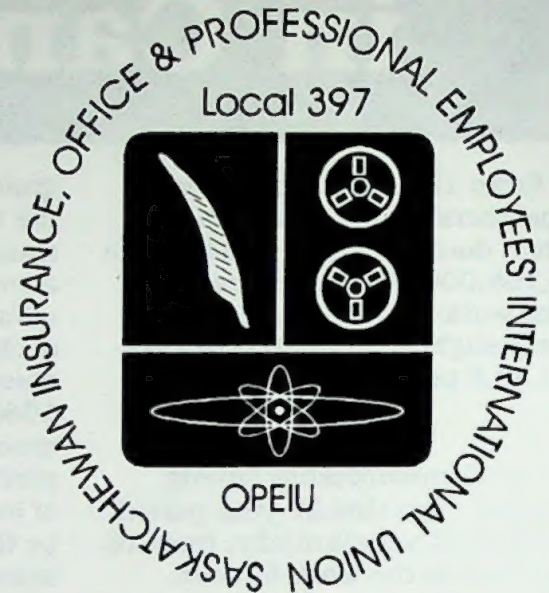
* Unionized workers are also twice as likely to be covered by a retirement income plan than are workers without unions to represent them. The latest statistics show that 77 percent of union members are covered by a pension plan, compared with only 33 percent of non-unionized workers.

(Sources: Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 75-001-XPE; *Unionized Workers*, by Diane Galarneau, *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Spring 1996, as published in CCPA Monitor.)

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OPEIU 397

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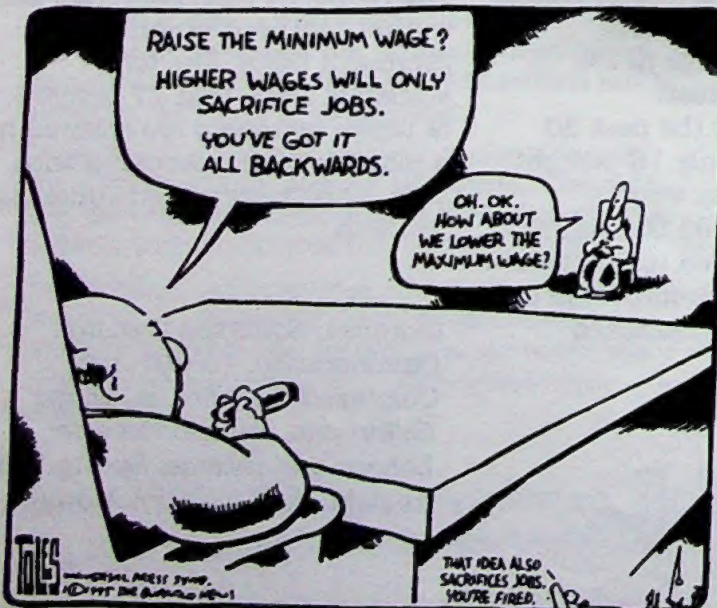


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you'll get to the poverty line.



Next time the Saskatchewan NDP government should raise the minimum wage to 75 percent of the average industrial wage. This would go a long way to eliminate the need for food banks, which the premier promised in his 1991 election platform.

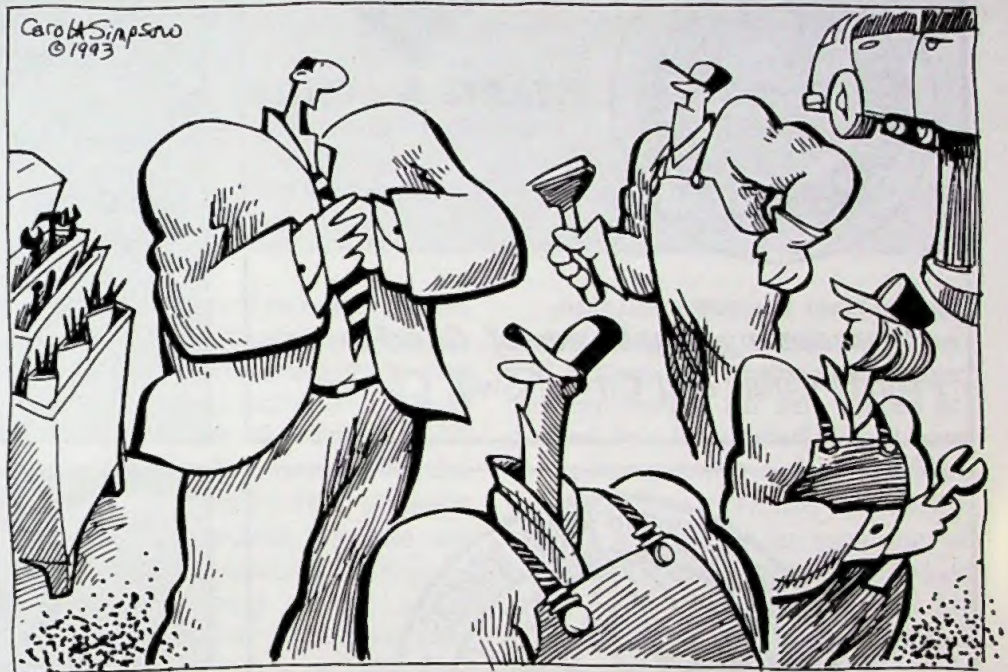


Unions'

Untapped Power

Why do we let employers control workers' pension funds?

by Ed Finn



Sixty years ago, told that the power of the Catholic Church was being mobilized against him, Joseph Stalin laughed. "How many divisions does the Pope have?" he asked contemptuously.

In the same scornful fashion, today's corporate executives sneer at the labour movement: "How many billions of dollars do the unions have?"

It's a crucial question. In the new age of unbridled capitalism, power is exercised by those with the most money. It doesn't have to be their money, as long as they have the power to use and invest it.

The 160 large corporations affiliated with the Business Council on National Issues control combined assets of more than \$1 trillion - 600 times more than the \$1.7 billion in assets of all the head offices of unions in Canada and all their locals. (That includes their bank accounts, buildings, investments and strike funds.)

It would appear that unions are hopelessly outmatched in any battle with employers that is decided by their relative financial strength.

But it doesn't have to be such

"I have some very sad news.

The owner willed your pension fund to his cat Muffy."

a one-sided contest. More than one-third of the vast amount now controlled by the corporations - about \$360 billion - consists of workers' money. It's the money that has accumulated in their occupational pension plans. While over half of that huge sum consists of the pension contributions of public employees, their funds too are used mainly for private sector investments and are managed by and for corporate interests, with little or no union input.

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan alone has \$35 billion. The pension funds of the Ontario hospital and municipal workers add up to \$30 billion. The other funds,

big and small, built up from workers' pension money across Canada, total close to another \$300 billion.

Right now, almost all that money is being invested and administered by the employers, or by trustees and financial experts acting on their behalf. Only a few of the unions that represent the workers covered by these plans enjoy even co-management status. Most pension plan boards have only token union representation - or none at all.

This situation is disturbing. Pension monies, after all, are an integral part of workers' compensation. Whether contributed by the

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workers directly or on their behalf by their employers, this money is a form of deferred wages; and it is their money when they earn it, not when they receive it. The unions which represent them can therefore quite legitimately demand exclusive control of their pension plans, including how, when and where to invest all these billions, which now dominate the stock market.

Instead, most unions have refrained from demanding even joint control with employers, even though these vast sums of their members' money are often deployed in ways that hurt workers rather than help them. Millions from the Ontario Municipal Employees' Retirement Fund, for example, have been invested in the MDS Health Group Ltd., which operates a chain of private medical laboratories. This investment not only contradicts the union's policy opposing private health care, but actually takes jobs away from unionized hospital workers when their work is contracted out to MDS. Pension money is also used in the private sector to defray the costs of moving plants from Canada to the United States or Mexico. The employees, in effect, are financing the loss of their own jobs.

The bankers, the financiers, the corporate movers and shakers now call the shots, politically as well as economically, because they've been entrusted with all this money to invest; and not just to invest in a neutral way, but to use tactically, to intimidate, to encourage, to discriminate for or against, to attack, to change or prevent change - in short, to shape a society that conforms to their objectives.

Why, then, do the unions - much to the delight of employers - continue to maintain what amounts to a "hands-off" approach to the management of the largest pool of their members' money? Basically, it's for three reasons: Because (1) most union officials tend to be overawed and baffled by

Top 15 Union Pension Funds

Rank	Pension Fund	Total Assets (1994)
1.	Ontario Teachers	\$35,100,000,000
2.	Quebec Public Employees	32,500,000,000
3.	Ontario Municipal Employees	21,000,000,000
4.	Ontario Public Employees	12,100,000,000
5.	Alberta Public Employees	9,000,000,000
6.	Ontario Hospital Employees	8,115,900,000
7.	CN Railway Employees	7,802,000,000
8.	Bell Canada Employees	6,861,000,000
9.	B.C. Municipal Employees	6,795,700,000
10.	Ontario Hydro Employees	6,649,500,000
11.	B.C. Public Employees	5,890,500,000
12.	Quebec Teachers	5,600,000,000
13.	Hydro Quebec Employees	5,100,000,000
14.	B.C. Teachers	5,075,000,000
15.	Quebec Construction Workers	4,273,900,000

the complexities of pension plans, and thus are inclined to leave such abstruse financial matters to the employer's hired experts - instead of hiring experts of their own; (2) most union leaders don't want the added responsibility that pension management would impose on them; and (3) pensions tend to be a concern mainly of the aging minority of union members who are in their late 40s or 50s, and thus get a lower priority than "bread-and-butter" issues such as wages, job security and vacations.

Unionists also have been intimidated by the claim of pension fund managers that they have a "fiduciary responsibility" to invest these funds where they will derive the highest returns for the union retirees. Force us to do otherwise, they warn, and you risk the wrath of your members, especially the older ones.

But it is possible to invest pension money in enterprises that would not harm workers or endanger their jobs. Several "ethical" investment funds do exactly that - and their performance is as good as, or better than, those of the funds that have no moral or ethical guidelines.

Another argument used to deter union demands for pension control is that the union would then be responsible for any losses incurred by a fund, and would have to make up such a shortfall from its own dues revenue. In theory, this is true. But in practice all pension funds are established on very conservative actuarial assumptions that virtually eliminate the possibility of losses. It would take a stock market crash of Great Depression proportions to drain large amounts from pension funds. So this fear instilled in union leaders is, for all practical purposes, completely unfounded.

Most union leaders have nevertheless been persuaded to confine their pension concerns to the bargaining table - to the occasional negotiation of benefit improvements or premium reductions. In so doing, they have relegated themselves to the economic minor leagues.

In a society where clout and influence are measured by the size of the financial club you carry, a policy of letting employers, banks, trust and insurance companies control the biggest accumulation of union members' money - and

use it frequently for anti-union purposes - is a policy that keeps the balance of power in labour-management relations tilted decisively in management's favour. The big corporations will always have an insurmountable edge as long as unions refuse to play on their terms, with their weapons.

Our union leaders should listen to Ray Rogers, one of the leading American proponents of fighting corporate capital with workers' capital. It was Rogers who devised the brilliant strategy of putting pressure on the financial backers of the J.P. Stevens Co. that forced that anti-union firm - after a futile 20-year organizing effort - to sign a contract with the Textile Workers' Union. What Norma Rae started on the shop floor, Rogers helped the union finish in the financial markets.

"When unions begin to exert their vast financial power to confront the corporations," says Rogers, "we may start to break up and disperse the concentration of corporate power that generates much of the social injustice in the world."

Gaining control over union members' pension money is not the only route to that kind of strategy. But no attempt to mobilize workers' financial and economic strength can succeed if it overlooks the \$360 billion of their pension money that has been put into the arsenal of their enemies.

Ed Finn is a research associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Over 100 Years of Solidarity

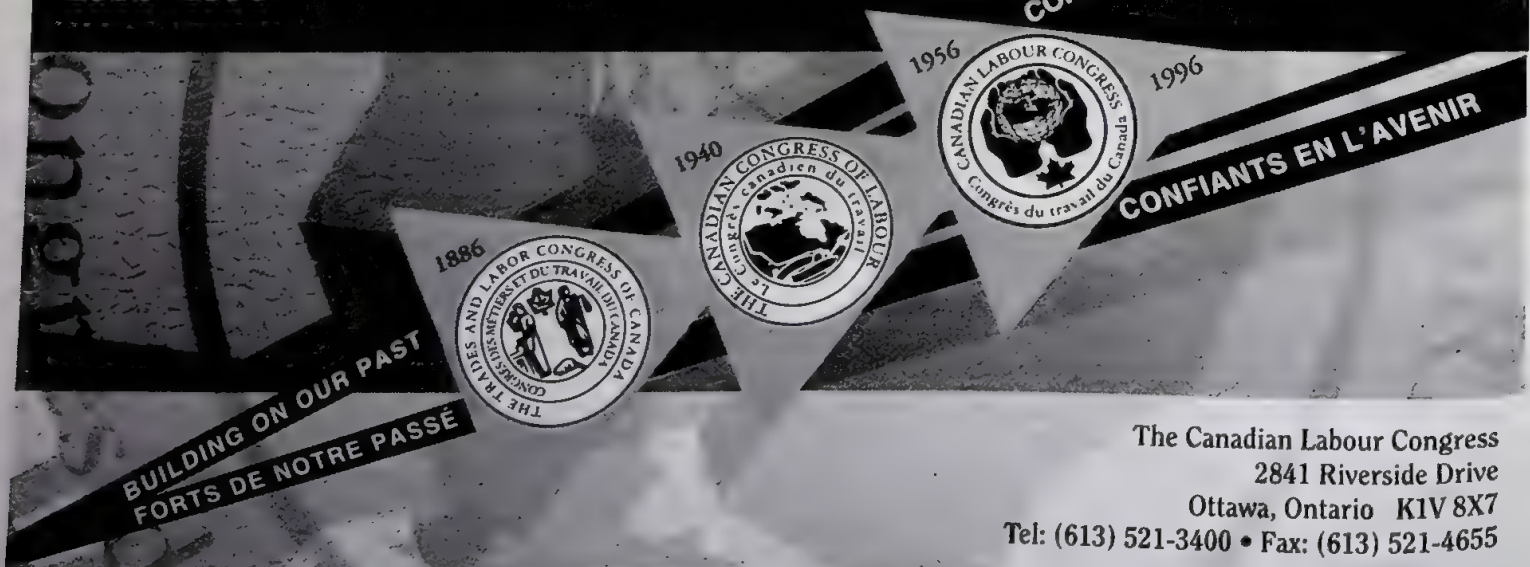


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Labour's Investment Funds

The idea of an alternative to capital could catch fire.

by Fred Wilson

In June, the Manitoba Federation of Labour's "Crocus Investment Fund" announced that it had invested almost \$1.6 million into the Canadian research firm Angus Reid and Associates. The investment, explained the Crocus Fund, was at a critical time for Reid and would keep its head office and the jobs therein in Manitoba.

In August, an organizing drive at Angus Reid's Vancouver office fell victim to a classic set of circumstances. The union signed over 60 percent of the part-time workers at the office. However the certification was foiled when Reid came up with a special project group of employees that reduced the union sign up to less than 50 percent. After a series of meetings with employees, the union ended up with fewer votes in a representation vote than the number of cards that it had signed.

In the course of the organizing drive, an official in Reid's organization asked for an argument why unionization would not be the end of the world, as many in the company's senior offices apparently believed it would. One argument offered was that labour and the NDP often buy research services, and being unionized would be a positive factor in their decision to use Angus Reid. The argument was considered; but Reid evidently concluded that maintaining a non-union environment was a greater advantage than any positive public relations that could be gained



**WORKING VENTURES
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with the labour movement and NDP customers by standing aside and letting part-time, low wage employees make their own decisions about going union.

The Angus Reid story is only a slice of life in the complex and contradictory world of labour strategy and Labour Sponsored Investment Funds. There are many who would dearly like to return to simpler times when labour was neither an investor in nor a customer of a company like Angus Reid. But the funds are here; most likely to stay. It's time for labour and the left to move the debate beyond whether the funds are a good idea and to examine the poli-

cies that determine how the funds are used.

The labour funds have been underestimated before. In 1992, a Canadian Autoworker Union paper rejected labour investment funds as "an expensive diversion" and calculated that "a worker venture fund would necessarily remain a bit player in the overall scheme of things." In 1992, the original labour fund, the Quebec Federation of Labour's Solidarity Fund, had assets of \$425 million. But just two years later, the QFL Solidarity Fund was worth \$1.2 billion and labour funds had emerged as the largest sources of venture capital in the country with assets of \$2 billion, and 362,000 individual investors in 14 separate funds. Today the funds are worth more than \$3 billion and counting.

In May of this year the Canadian Labour Congress convention's main economic and social policy statement gave a fulsome endorsement of the funds and called for expanded efforts on the investment front, although no analysis of the funds or their operating principles was offered. It was projected, instead, that a major conference on the subject would be organized soon.

Of course, the rapid growth of the funds has been fuelled by the lucrative tax incentives that have offered high income workers effective 80 percent tax write-offs in

past years. The Liberals began to scale back the tax perks in the last budget, and there will no doubt be further encroachments next year.

Therein lies the key problem for labour with the investment funds. What justification can be advanced for these kind of tax write-offs for high wage workers when low income Canadians are suffering without any tax breaks and seeing the social safety net dismantled? The irony in the issue was revealed rather dramatically when the CLC and Federations of Labour held a series of public events across the country last spring to release the alternative federal budget. The alternative budget railed against unfair taxation and growing economic inequality. But there were scant trade unionists following the message. The CLC workshops happened to coincide with the last days to buy RRSP's, and those with sufficient disposable incomes were lined up at their financial institutions - in many cases to buy an RRSP from a labour fund.

The justification for the labour fund tax breaks is their mandate to provide an alternative pool of capital which will be more democratically controlled and can support strategic investments in communities. The acid test is therefore the extent to which the labour funds actually are a part of a broader strategy to democratize the economy.

There are positive examples of the funds helping workers and unions solve crucial problems. Last year Bell Telephone in Ontario announced a reengineering plan to downsize and contract out in-home wiring for telephone services. The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union was able to convince Bell to offer the contract to the existing employees, and the employees were able to establish a worker-owned company with capital from the Quebec Solidarity Fund. Needless to say, a policy paper to the CEP's national convention in September gives

strong support to labour investment funds, as part of a broader strategy including political action on social programs and jobs issues.

After an initially slow response to criticism, and a particularly pointed debate in the Ontario labour movement, the labour funds have begun to develop social policies. Five major labour movement funds, including Quebec's Solidarity Fund, B.C.'s Working Opportunity Fund, Manitoba's Crocus Fund, Ontario's First Ontario Fund, and New Brunswick's new Workers' Investment Fund, have signed a joint "defining statement" of principles declaring that their funds will be controlled by workers' organizations and will meet economic and social goals in investments. To implement these principles, most of the funds use "social audits" to evaluate the worthiness of a company for investment. Hardly a *Regina Manifesto*, the defining statement nevertheless sets out a number of social standards that, in part, answers criticism of the ethical and ideological mission of the investment funds.

However, 13 other funds such as the Building Trades' Working Ventures Fund, the UFCW's Integrated Growth Fund and ACTRA's Active Communications Fund, are not party to the statement of principles. Moreover, in a number of the other funds, unions or professional groups are simply covers for financial interests who run the funds for no particular social purpose.

Within the five funds joined by the defining statement, there are also important differences. The First Ontario Fund, for example, strives to allocate 30 percent of its investment in worker ownership and cooperatives. Those are not key goals of B.C.'s Working Opportunity Fund, however, which largely has restricted its investments to providing risk capital for entrepreneurs in niche markets.

These differences are crucial

for the political role that the labour funds will play in the big struggle over investment and the country's economic and social direction. For labour and the NDP to recapture lost ground in the battle of social and economic ideas, a critique of capital and a popular alternative method must come forward. The best thinking about a popular alternative has wrestled with the central issues of investment, sectoral economic strategies and community economic development. These are today's foundation for some old, but ever relevant, rallying calls: economic democracy, community and worker control, people before profits.

Can the labour funds play the political role that labour and the NDP need? Are they a part of a national strategy for workers and communities? Are they self-serving, or do they embrace social stability? A political policy question is what, if any, relationship the investment funds have to the Canadian Labour Congress' call for a new "national investment fund" - "a centralized pool of investment capital which could be used to assist sector development agencies, community development corporations and cooperatives...." It is a key idea in the CLC's proposed alternative economic strategy to challenge the one-sided power of capital in the economy and to revitalize the left.

In itself, the idea of an investment fund is not likely to kindle flames of passion that will sweep New Democrats back into Parliament. But connected to a real and passionate struggle to offer workers, like those at Bell, an alternative to the corporate agenda, or to provide workers like those at Angus Reid a chance to win new rights and a better living, the idea of an alternative to capital could catch fire.

Fred Wilson is a national representative for the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union.

Interest-based Bargaining

Whether interest-based bargaining can survive the challenge or whether it is a short-lived phenomenon peculiar to the angst-ridden nineties remains to be seen.

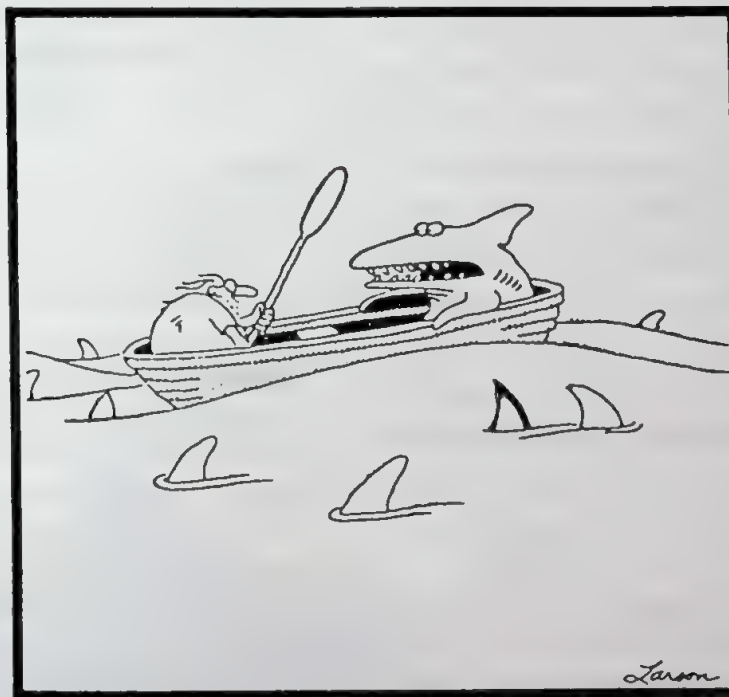
by Larry Haiven

With the shrinking of the public purse in recent years, it is not surprising that much of the collective bargaining between public sector employers and their unions has become rancorous.

But paradoxically, at the same time a new and opposite trend is gaining momentum. And the clash between the two has divided the labour movement.

That new trend is known by several names: principled bargaining, mutual gains bargaining, but most commonly as interest-based bargaining (IBB). In short, it purports to reinvent the process of negotiation, to replace long-established adversarial methods with an elusive "win-win" scenario.

Popularized by Roger Fisher and other members of the Harvard Negotiation Project in the 1983 book *Getting to Yes*, interest-based bargaining proposes that each side abandon fixed positions and concentrate on the broad interests of the two parties. Both parties are



"OK. I'll go back and tell my people that you're staying in the boat, but I warn you they're *not* going to like it."

supposed to frame all issues as problems to be solved together, rather than as demands to be won. Often, in fact, subcommittees made up of both union and employer representatives will be assigned to "study" a problem jointly and come back to the main table with proposals for its solution.

But Stan Marshall, senior research officer of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, says that in these times, the union is often tightly constrained from the start. "In theory, both sides are

supposed to be able to win, but in practice it puts the union on management's terrain. Management's problems become our problems. Management's issues are problems that we are expected to help them resolve in the context of bargaining.

"And governments' biggest problem," insists Marshall, "is that they want to make cuts from the federal, to the provincial and right down through the municipal."

On the other hand, Dorian Hassard, a negotiator for the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union (SGEU), suggests that interest-based bargaining may be the best way that unions have to make their concerns known to management amid cut-backs and downsizing. In his union's last round of negotiations on behalf of the 8,500-member public service/government employment bargaining unit, the government set out a modest mandate early on. Having gone through a four-month rotating strike in the

CALM

previous bargaining round, SGEU members in the public service were loath to strike again. But they had some important goals they wanted to achieve.

"Our members wanted no concessions, an extended health care plan and salary improvements for the lowest-paid in the female-dominated occupations. The government was under a lot of political pressure not to give us the extended health care plan," Hassard explained, because the opposition said most taxpayers did not enjoy such benefits. "But we explained to them that we should be able to make the decision on how to divide up the monetary mandate they had given us."

Because government negotiators had committed themselves to and stuck by the interest-based bargaining approach and because the proposals were reasonable ones, they had to listen to the union and not merely refuse, as might be the case in traditional adversarial bargaining. Hassard feels the union achieved a lot through the process, not only in deciding how the monetary package would be divided but especially in gains in non-monetary or "language" issues.

"On some of the issues, managers [on the employer negotiating team] were sounding like union members. There were improvements in the language on discipline that management really agreed with." Moreover, says Hassard, management has agreed to engage in bargaining within the term of the collective agreement on a range of issues including equal pay for work of equal value. While the union does not have the strike threat during these mid-term talks, the move away from one-shot end-of-contract bargaining is something of a breakthrough, especially since management is obliged to try to reach mutually-satisfactory solutions.

Jointness or mutuality is perhaps the most important part of interest-based bargaining. Accord-

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The registration fee is \$105 by the early-bird deadline of October 18 and \$150 by the final deadline of November 1. Space is limited so register soon.

For more information, contact Conference Coordinator Pam Kapoor, c/o Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, Suite 103, 2709 12th Avenue, Regina, S4T 1J3. Office phone number: 306-924-8575. Fax: 306-525-8960.

Organized by the Pay Equity Coalition of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour in collaboration with the Women's and Human Rights Department of the Canadian Labour Congress. Also co-sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, Prince Albert YWCA, Catholic Family Services of Saskatoon, Moose Jaw Transition House and the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women.

Financial assistance for this conference has been provided by Labour-Management Partnerships Program, Government of Canada.



ing to the gurus, IBB works when and only when both parties, right up to their most senior levels, "buy in" to the process. Union presidents and employer CEOs (or ministers and deputy ministers in the case of government) are supposed to pledge mutual allegiance to the process. Their respective bargaining representatives then take training in IBB, sometimes separately, but often together.

While private consulting companies offer training and guidance in the new approach, among the strongest proponents and consultants are departments of labour across the country and perhaps the most enthusiastic among these is Human Resources Development Canada, which is promoting the technique aggressively to parties in the federal jurisdiction. Like their provincial counterparts, mediators with Labour Canada have been thoroughly trained in IBB and play an active role during negotiations in guiding labour and management past rough spots.

The expertise of federal mediators has been sorely tested in several negotiations recently as em-

ployers in that jurisdiction have shown less than the necessary mutuality. In the middle of interest-based negotiations between the CEP union and Bell Canada, the company announced the layoff of 10,000 employees.

And the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which, under president Tony Manera embraced the approach with its three unions, effectively abandoned it when Perrin Beatty replaced him, and resorted to old-style knock 'em down and drag 'em out tactics. The new president introduced far deeper cuts than his predecessor, presented an ultimatum to the unions, tried to break up their hard-won solidarity and took negotiations right to the brink of a national strike this year.

Despite CBC management's about-face, one union negotiator from Saskatchewan remains enthusiastic about IBB. Armand Roy, a graphic designer with CBC Regina and a member of the national negotiating committee of CEP-NABET (which represents technical workers), insists IBB failed not because of anything inherently

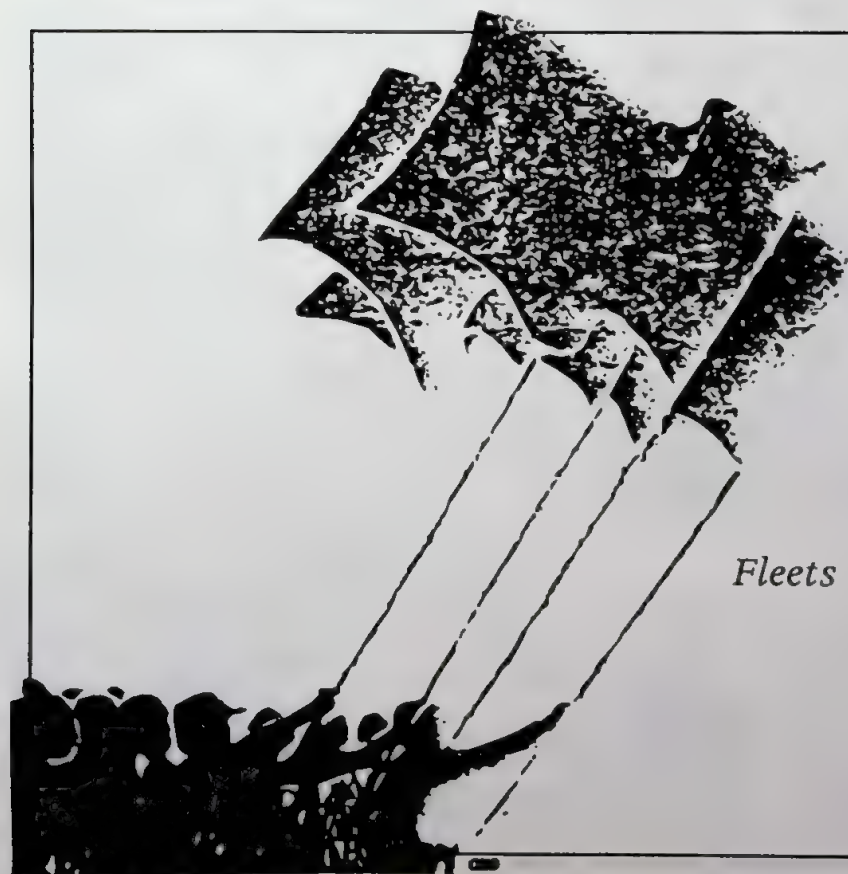
wrong in the technique itself.

"You need two partners that really do have a mutual interest in mind. The difficulty is overcoming old principles and ideals the sides have of each other. So they often revert back to old confrontational styles of bargaining."

After Manera left, Roy said, "our attempt at IBB failed because the corporation management didn't believe in it."

While Roy feels IBB can be very helpful to unions, he is rueful about the motives employers often have in getting into the process. "Often the only time employers are interested in IBB is in hard times or when they want to change the entire structure of the organization. In good times, when IBB would be of interest to both parties, the employer often isn't interested."

Like Hassard, however, Roy feels that IBB, properly supported by both parties, can be very useful to unions in hard times because it can bring to management's attention legitimate concerns of the employees and their unions about the consequences of cuts and alternate solutions. "We knew we



*If we workers take a notion,
we can stop all speeding
trains*

*Every ship upon the ocean
we can tie with mighty
chains*

*Every wheel in the creation,
every mine and every mill*

*Fleets and armies of all nations will
at our command stand still.*

—Joe Hill

*The Canadian Union
of Postal Workers*



were in concession bargaining; but we thought IBB would work to convince management to see things in a different light."

Even Marshall is not prepared to write off interest-based bargaining out of hand. He cites several large and powerful union locals, like quite a few in Quebec and CUPE's affiliate at Ontario Hydro who have maintained their militancy while engaging in these more cooperative bargaining techniques. Yet, he says, when major restructuring occurs, the process is stretched to the limit and parties revert to adversarial methods.

Whether interest-based bargaining can survive the challenge or whether it is a short-lived phenomenon peculiar to the angst-ridden nineties remains to be seen.

Larry Halven is secretary of the Saskatoon Social Justice Network and teaches industrial relations and labour studies in the College of Commerce at the University of Saskatchewan.

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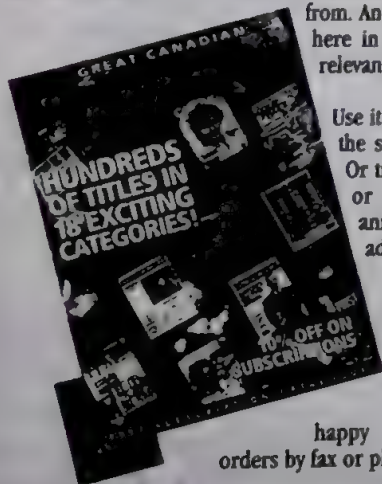
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Sharing the Work

Many people are starting to question why some work very long hours while others are left with part-time work or no work at all.

by Guy Marsden

According to labour historian John Batty, "the catalyst which served to give birth to a Canadian labour movement was the demand for a shorter work day."

Indeed, during the 1860s and 1870s a third of all strikes were motivated by workers' demands for shorter hours or control over some other aspect of working life.

Canadian unions and movements like the Nine Hour Leagues were effective in reducing the standard work week from around 64 hours in 1870 to 49 hours in the 1930s. In 1937, a strike by the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union in Quebec was successful in reducing the work week from 80 hours to 44 hours per week.

In the United States, the American Federation of Labour spearheaded a campaign to "share the work" during the great depression. In 1933, the U.S. Senate passed a bill mandating a 30-hour work week, but under serious pressure from business, President Roosevelt vetoed the bill.

Following World War II, the labour movement in Canada and the United States abandoned the fight for shorter hours. The state pursued full employment through Keynesian demand management, a strategy that promoted increased consumption. Advertising helped shape a consumer society where people were told they were incomplete unless they had the latest gadgets. Unions turned their attention towards higher wages, instead of increased leisure.



Bruce O'Hara

Today, the Canadian government and the business community make no pretensions about supporting full employment. Technological advance, free trade agreements, high interest rates and privatization have contributed to an official unemployment rate of nearly ten percent. Another one in three Canadians are eking out a relatively marginal existence with part-time and temporary work or self-employment.

While many Canadians are facing unemployment and underemployment, others are working extremely long hours. In 1993, 11 percent of the labour force worked over 50 hours per week. Overtime rates are at record

levels. A total of 800,000 Canadians worked 6.4 million hours of paid overtime each week, while another 500,000 Canadians worked overtime without pay.

A family must now work 65 - 80 hours per week just to maintain the same standard of living provided

by a single bread-winner who worked 45 hours per week 20 years ago. A second unpaid shift for domestic chores can add another 25 to 45 hours to the work week. Carleton professor Linda Duxbury estimates that two-thirds of working mothers and half of working fathers are experiencing unreasonable levels of stress.

Many people are starting to question why some work very long hours while others are left with part-time work or no work at all. Across Canada, the labour movement is beginning to once again turn its attention towards shorter work time as a solution to the unemployment crisis.

Though a rough consensus is emerging on the benefits of shorter work time, several difficult strategic questions arise. Should reduced hours of work be pursued through collective agreements or legislation? Will a pay cut be necessary to obtain shorter hours? Can rank and file union members be mobilized around this issue?

Collective Agreements vs. Legislation

Perhaps the most concrete example of job creation through reduced work time was the 1993 agreement negotiated between the Canadian Auto Workers and Chrysler at the Windsor mini-van plant. Under the agreement, Chrysler curtailed overtime through the introduction of a third shift and regular daily hours were cut from eight to seven and a half with no cut in pay. As a result of the agreement, over 1,000 new workers were hired at the plant.

The CAW is one of the most vocal unions in promoting a variety of forms of reduced work time, such as a shorter work week, time off in lieu of overtime, increased vacation time, parental leave, training programs, and education and travel leaves. Sam Ginden, assistant to CAW president Buzz Hargrove, has suggested a gradual approach that would see unions bargain a 32-hour work week for all new employees.

The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada has also been successful in negotiating shorter hours for some of its members. About 52,000 CEP members work less than the standard 40-hour work week.

CEP recently negotiated a three-year agreement with Bell Canada to reduce work hours, which will vary from 32 hours weekly to 38 hours, depending on workloads and employee preferences. A seasonal leave provision in the contract will allow employees to take a five-week sabbatical at 90 percent pay, in exchange for a ten percent year-round reduction in pay.

Faced with deficit-cutting and program-slashing governments across the country, public sector unions are also beginning to embrace shorter work time as one solution to unemployment and increasing rates of unpaid overtime.



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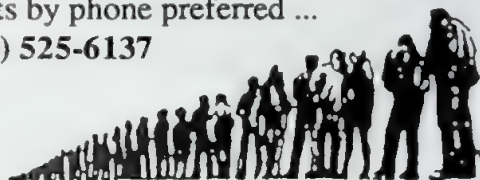
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At their 1995 national convention, the Canadian Union of Public Employees approved a new statement on work time which committed the union to making "the reduction and fair distribution of work time a top priority."

Echoing the recommendations of the federal government's Advisory Committee on the Distribution of Work Time, CUPE's statement advocates a legislated, cross-Canada work week no longer than 40 hours (some provinces still have work weeks of 44 and 48 hours), the right to refuse overtime work, time off in lieu of overtime in excess of 100 hours annually, an end to unpaid overtime, pro-rated benefits for part-time workers, greater emphasis on phased-in retirement, and paid and unpaid family and educational leave.

Leery of imposed unpaid "Ray Days" and "Filmon Fridays," CUPE's statement recommended the reduction of regular hours of work "on a weekly or annual basis with no loss in pay based on *voluntary* and *negotiated* work time reduction."

There are some drawbacks to negotiating shorter work time through collective agreements though. Only 35 percent of the labour force is unionized, so the positive effects of reduced work time on the economy and society as a whole are limited.

Bruce O'Hara, author of *Working Harder Isn't Working* and *Put Work In Its Place*, has promoted a variety of shorter work time options such as job sharing, phased-in retirement and banked overtime. However, he feels the main objective of shorter work time activists should be a legislated four-day, 32-hour work week.

"Small cuts in work time don't tend to be as effective in creating jobs," he says. "I think we really need to look at the big picture."

According to O'Hara's calculations, a legislated 32-hour work week with strict controls on overtime would create over a million jobs across Canada. Government expenditures on social assistance and other social programs would drop and tax revenues would increase as employment expanded.

The drastic decline in unemployment would also help reduce government deficits, and consequently would ease the pressure to cut social programs. As economist Reuben Bellan has noted, in every year since World War II that the unemployment rate was under five percent, the federal government had a budget surplus. In contrast, every year when unemployment was over seven percent, the federal government recorded a deficit.

Julie White, a researcher with the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers, is part way through a study on the impact of shorter hours on various sectors. Though the CEP has led private sector unions in achieving shorter hours, she says there is a lot of pressure to increase hours by employers.

"It's very hard to push toward shorter hours,

except in a situation of layoffs," she argues.

White thinks that bringing the standard work week across the country to 40 hours and real controls on overtime should be pursued, such as time off in lieu of overtime pay.

In a hostile environment where employers are pushing for even longer hours, White feels that these policy objectives are more realizable than the objective of a 32-hour work week.

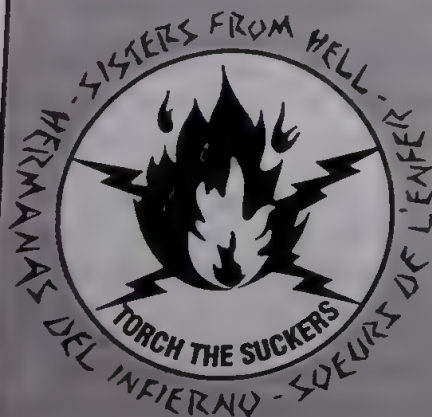
Saskatchewan Federation of Labour president Barb Byers is an active proponent of shorter work time. Byers argues that the labour movement needs to adopt a multifaceted approach of pushing for a shorter work week, restrictions on overtime, increased vacations and other measures both within collective agreements and legislation.

"When we start to get it in collective agreements it will start to work elsewhere," she says.

A Cut in Pay?

Sisters from Hell is a Solidarity "Funraiser" network which builds bridges through education, activism and the sharing of humour. Our name is derived from the reality that most of the working class has endured some form of hell - discrimination, exploitation, harassment, regressive laws or bad faith bargaining. We have been hit by cars & assaulted by police on picket lines, lost our homes due to unemployment and have been injured or killed in unsafe work environments.

We struggle for justice, healthcare & a future with dignity. We maintain our sense of humour as a positive anchor in a hostile world. On yeah, and from time to time we kick some corporate butt and celebrate our victories while raising funds for worthy causes like strikes and women's shelters.



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Shorter work time with no cut in pay has been the traditional labour position. As the CAW pamphlet *More time for ourselves, our children, our community* states: "With each worker producing so much more today, we can have a cut in hours without a cut in pay."

"This means taking on the corporations to, first of all, get a larger share of what we produce. And second, it means changing our own priorities and taking more of what we can win from our employers in the form of reduced working time."

The CEP's Julie White says that "pay cuts are not popular," but she says it depends how it is negotiated and what the trade-offs are. When it is a layoff issue, people will inevitably take a pay cut.

Sometimes a pay cut doesn't affect a worker that much, depending on the tax bracket, White says. But, she asks: "why doesn't the employer take a cut?"

Bruce O'Hara's four-day work week plan would involve an overall wage cut of five percent in exchange for 52 long weekends a year. His plan would also involve rolling statutory holidays into the longer weekends, converting salaried positions into hourly wage positions, providing pro-rated benefits for part-time workers and raising the minimum wage.

Though talk of wage cuts are anathema to union members, O'Hara says that "when they start to look at the details the response is positive."

"As soon as they start looking at this strategically, they realize that a shorter work week with five percent loss in pay is a goal you can probably have a shot at getting," O'Hara says. "Whereas a four-day work week with no loss in pay is impossibly hard to get."

O'Hara says that advocates for a shorter work week with no cut in pay should go at it the other way around. "Win a four-day work week with five percent less in take-home pay and set a bargaining target to get it back in the following contract."

"The biggest thing that makes bargaining easier is when unemployment goes down," he adds. "That restores the balance of power."

Indeed, studies show that a significant number of Canadians are willing to make a financial sacrifice for more time off. A 1987 Conference Board of Canada study found that nearly a third of Canadians were in favour of reduced work time for a proportionate reduction in pay. More recently, a Quebec Federation of Labour poll conducted in 1994 found that 63 percent of respondents favoured a four-day work week, and half would take a pay cut to achieve it.

Still, Barb Byers says it is "really difficult for workers to get into cuts in pay when they have had no increase in pay for years." The fact that workers have lost a lot of ground partly explains why workers are increasingly turning towards overtime and moonlighting, she says.

According to Byers, redistribution of work needs to be looked at in conjunction with the taxation system.

"If you make the taxation system more equitable, it will discourage people from going out and getting that second job, because it will be less financially advantageous to them."

Leading the Fight

As the national coordinator of the Shorter Work Time Network, O'Hara has assisted in the formation of local chapters in several major Canadian cities. The grass roots organization, modelled after the Action Canada Network, provides the opportunity for individuals and groups to work together to promote shorter work time across Canada.

However, O'Hara feels that the labour movement has the resources and organization to lead the fight for a shorter work week. In fact, he thinks that every major labour body should have one staff person solely dedicated to working on this issue.

Byers agrees that the labour movement has to be the leader in the fight for a shorter work week.

"If the labour movement doesn't pick this one up and really work on it, we are doing our members and other workers a disservice," says Byers. "If we don't take it on, we are going to see more and more people being disconnected either with no job or part-time jobs and there will be greater disparities."

While some labour activists are eager to fight for shorter hours, others see it as an infringement on existing rights. Some workers are opposed to any restrictions on their overtime.

In a climate of constant downsizing, Byers says that a lot of workers view overtime as an insurance fund to pay off their mortgage faster or save up some money in case they lose their job.

"People have used overtime to supplement their income," she says. "Now they're hooked on it."

However, many people are growing increasingly worried about their kids getting jobs. During the negotiations at Chrysler's mini-van plant in 1993, CAW negotiators successfully linked the issue of shorter work time with jobs for union members' kids.

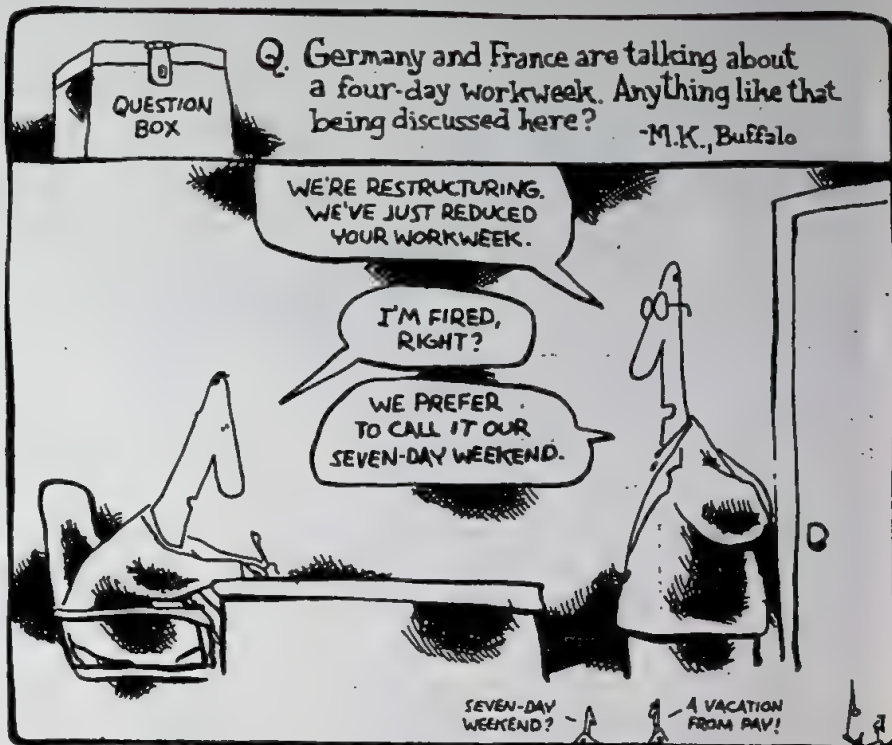
"Twenty-five years ago, parents used to joke about whether their kids would ever leave home," Byers says. "Now, it is a very serious thing about parents being concerned whether their children will ever have the opportunity to leave home."

Peter Gilmer of the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry says that the idea of a shorter work week is not just a concern for the labour movement. It is also a concern for those who are unemployed and living in

poverty.

"Poverty is becoming chronic among youth," Gilmer says. "There's a real lack of job opportunities."

"Labour's push for a shorter work week is one



way of showing its commitment to its social partners on the issue of job creation," he argues.

Indeed, one of the most attractive features of the shorter work week is that it offers the labour movement a real opportunity to build solidarity with the unemployed, the anti-poverty movement, churches, women's organizations, environmentalists concerned about too much consumption and young people facing a bleak job market.

The struggle for a shorter work week will not be easy though. Governments and the business community are more concerned with increasing the "flexibility" of labour markets rather than reducing unemployment. A 1994 Canadian Federation of Independent Business poll found that 75 percent of businesses opposed a shorter work week because of the perceived added costs of benefits, training and administration.

Still, compared with a defensive stance of retrenchment against a myriad of cutbacks, a campaign to share the work offers the labour movement the opportunity to take the offensive with a proactive vision of a society where there is work for all as well as the time for families, friends and communities.

Guy Marsden is the chairperson of the Regina chapter of the Shorter Work Time Network and is executive assistant for CUPE Saskatchewan.



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A message from 50,000 junior kindergarten students
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Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association

The Ontario Fightback Campaign

Where do we go from here?

by Jonathan Eaton

Anyone who came to the day of protest in Hamilton last February 23 would agree that it was an unforgettable experience.

Teachers, nurses, public service employees, church and anti-poverty activists, seniors and children, joined workers from all walks of life in a massive protest against the aggressive right-wing agenda of the Mike Harris government.

Close to 120,000 people participated, making this the largest political protest in Ontario history.

The Hamilton action, led by the Ontario Federation of Labour, came on the heels of a successful one-day strike in London, and was followed by big protests in Kitchener-Waterloo in April and Peterborough in June.

All four of these protests have featured picketing and work stoppages at dozens of private and public-sector workplaces, as well as marches and speeches. The shutdowns are aimed at impressing on employers that they cannot expect to have labour peace at the same time as they are supporting the Harris assault on working people.

The days of protest have proven that labour can work successfully with a broad range of social justice activists to mobilize communities, shut down workplaces and get people out on the streets. Ontario is not Alabama, and people here are not about to stand by passively while our key social programs, education, health care, and environmental and labour standards are gutted by right-wing ideologues.

Yet, it is apparent that - for all their size and vigour - the days of protest have not pushed Mike Harris off of his agenda by one iota.

Over \$8 billion in destructive cuts were rammed through in his first year - and this is just the first instalment. The bulk of these cuts will go, not to decrease the deficit, but to pay for a 30 percent income-tax break that overwhelmingly benefits the wealthy.

Most of the progressive legacy of the former New Democratic Party government, including anti-scab legislation, employment equity, pay equity in the broader public sector, and mandatory health and

previous page photo
Hamilton Day of Protest, February 1996
photo: Spencer Platt

WHY WE ORGANIZE

A union organizing drive can strain a workplace; but a union and some goodwill can help solve the problems unorganized workers face in communicating with a distracted employer.

Last fall, editorial employees at the Owen Sound Sun Times organized a unit of the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild. Our drive followed several worrisome years of staff cuts, rising use of freelance workers and what we saw as reduced management commitment to quality and integrity of our craft.

A depression in the newspaper business had diverted a paper once known for high journalistic standards towards parochialism and it bothered us. As writers, editors, photographers and clerical workers, we feared not only for our professional future, but also for the interests of our readers and the Sun Times' future; but the bosses just didn't seem to get it until we organized a union.

The very act of organizing solved problems. Immediately, the union provided an outlet for our anxieties. We had the satisfaction of doing something to seek stability and protest effectively. The drive itself revealed surprising agreement among us and brought that agreement into the open. To all of this, our employer responded much better than we expected.

We achieved a first contract with relative ease. We did this in six months of bargaining and without the need for a strike vote. Not only did collective bargaining bring structure to the workplace, it provided solutions to a chronic night shift staffing problem which had eluded resolution for years.



JIM ALGIE
EDITORIAL WRITER

A union drive can force management to manage. It can end long-standing, arbitrary practices which damage morale and business. Think of yourselves: save your company, form a union.

**WHILE THERE IS STILL TIME:
ORGANIZE!**



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safety training, have been eliminated or defaced beyond recognition.

The Tories have driven their agenda with unprecedented speed. For example, Bill 7, the legislation which repealed the NDP's labour law reforms and rolled back a host of other labour rights, was bulldozed through the Legislature in just three weeks.

Less than 24 hours after Bill 7 passed, the minister of labour introduced legislation to dismantle labour participation in the Workers' Compensation Board. No sooner had that Bill passed, the government went after pay equity. And on and on and on.

The protests have also failed to significantly diminish the Tories' popularity. While some polls last winter indicated that the government had slumped into the mid-30 percent range, behind the opposition Liberals, the Tories have since bounced back.

A recent province-wide poll reported that the Tories were supported by 53 percent of the public, well ahead of the other two parties. It appears that most of the people who voted Mike Harris into power in 1995 are ready to do so again. (Harris won 82 of 130 seats in 1995 with 44.8 percent of the popular vote).

"There has been no change in attitudes yet," acknowledges David Mackenzie, staff representative in the national office of the Steelworkers' union.

The question that labour and social justice activists in Ontario have to ask ourselves is: what have we learned from the fightback campaign so far - and where do we go from here?

The establishment press would certainly like us to believe that the days of protest have been a complete flop.

"If [OFL president Gord] Wilson wants to ensure that Mr. Harris is defeated, the report card on his strategy from the experts would not give him encouragement at this point," the *Globe and Mail* intoned in April. "None of them thinks that the protests have done much more than polarize an already polarized electorate a little more deeply."

Each protest is followed by a chorus of "experts" saying that the fightback is fizzling. Harris isn't listening, they insist. Surely *this* will be the last protest, they wail.

This criticism completely misunderstands what the days of protest are all about, says Sam Gindin, assistant to the president of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW).



"No one expected Harris to appear on television after the protests to apologize for his mistakes," Gindin notes.

"The new activism is about educating, organizing and mobilizing *through* protest. Community-wide campaigns are a vehicle for getting more information out, forcing broader discussions at the local level, bringing more people into politics, sharpening the skills of activists, creating structures for fighting back."

John Clarke, leader of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, reiterates this point.

"We've started to involve people who never in their lives had considered being politically active," he says. Clarke sees the possibility of a mass mobilization emerging that will ultimately make the province "ungovernable" for Harris.

The involvement of social activists like Clarke has grown significantly since the first day of action in London. This is, perhaps where the impact of the protests have been greatest.

Organizing committees from each community



photos: Spencer Platt

have been very broadly-based, reaching beyond local labour councils to include individuals ranging from church leaders to women's shelter directors.

"Organized labour and our allies in the different community organizations that make up the social movement came together like never before," CAW president Buzz Hargrove declared after the Kitchener-Waterloo day of protest.

The future of this coalition between the labour movement and other social justice groups is uncertain, however. A proposal from Hargrove that the leaders of eight of the coalition partners be invited to participate directly in meetings of the heads of Ontario unions met a frosty reception from most of the other unions.

Many Ontario union leaders remain somewhat suspicious of the coalition groups and uncertain of their underlying commitment to the labour movement.

As if to confirm these fears, Gerard Kennedy, until recently the high-profile and media-savvy director of Toronto's largest food bank, swept a May by-election in the working class riding of York South - under the Liberal banner. Seeing the leader of a prominent, progressive community organization enter the Legislature for a party that fought tooth-and-nail against even modest NDP labour law reforms, left many labour leaders shaking their heads in dismay.

As a result of the lack of consensus among

Ontario unions on whether and how to strengthen coalitions, the relationship remains largely ad hoc, needing to be re-formed in each community where protests are organized. Nevertheless, unions and community organizations have developed a new degree of solidarity that was unknown even a few years ago.

Contrary to the dirge-like commentary in the mainstream media, the days of protest have been broadly-based, innovative, spirited, and fun. The question is, where will this mounting wave of protest lead?

Sam Gindin sees the protests as a way to keep the labour movement moving. "What is keeping us alive and relevant as a movement is that we're fighting back, challenging, building," he says. "The protests are our energizers. They keep us going."

But the day of protest tactic "will only be effective if it's part of a longer-term, multifaceted strategy that focuses on the next election," asserts David Mackenzie of the Steelworkers. "If it doesn't do that, all it will be is noisy fun on the streets."

Ultimately, the goal must be a change in government. Achieving this goal will require a change in politics in Ontario.

Jonathan Eaton is a lawyer and freelance writer based in Toronto. He is currently working on a major research project with the Canadian Office of UNITE.



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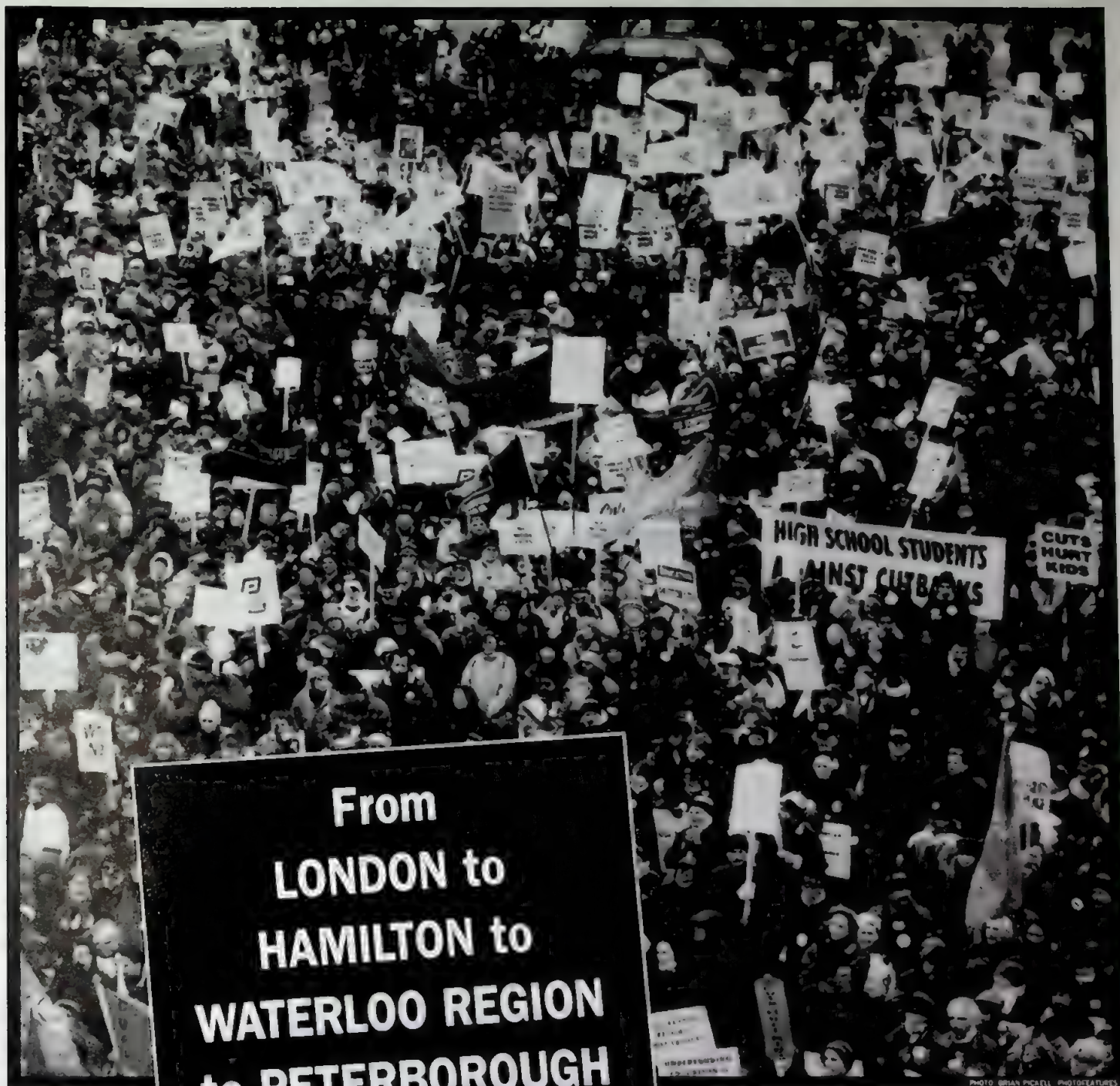
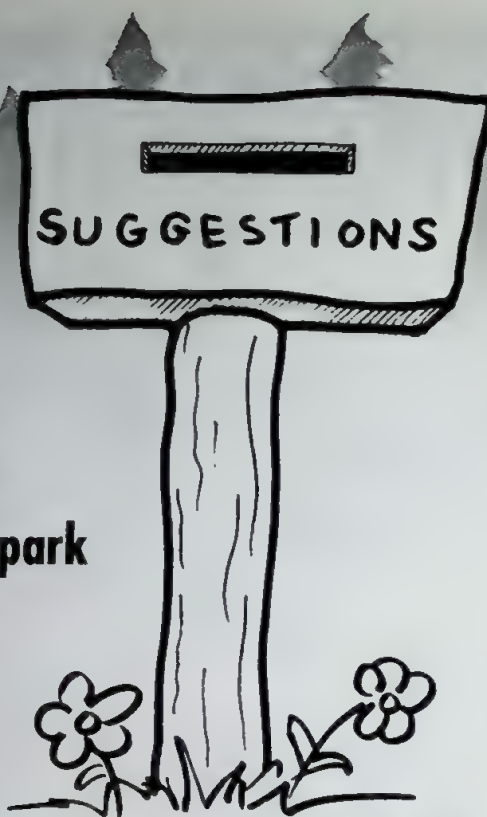


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- In contrast, the publicly-owned and operated cabins at Greenwater Provincial Park — which were never privatized — have doubled their profits over the same period, growing from \$38,954 in 1986-87 to \$76,899 in 1994-95.

The information supports the need for the government to initiate a full-scale, investigation into park privatization. That's why we're asking for one. We hope you'll join us.

For more information, call SGEU at 1-800-667-5221, extension 216.

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Labour's Response Abroad

Unions in New Zealand and France are fighting back against right-wing governments.

by Phil Johnson

Free trade. De-regulation. Privatization. Social welfare reform. These are the main tenets of the New Right faith. In order to realize their vision of the global economy, business and governments have set out to render trade unions ineffectual. Workers in Canada are all too familiar with the demand for lower wages and more "flexible" working conditions in a context of high unemployment. New Zealand and France provide examples of how trade unions abroad are responding to the demands of the New Right.

After 1984, New Zealand, once an egalitarian and solidly social democratic nation, began a series of radical right-wing reforms that devastated both the economy and the social system. The revolution was begun by a Labour government that had campaigned on a leftist platform. Once elected, they led New Zealand into the most radical program of free market reforms ever experienced by a developed country.

The Labour government survived two terms, creating levels of poverty, violence and unemployment previously unheard of in New Zealand. In 1990, Labour was defeated in the biggest landslide in the country's history. Unfortunately, the incoming government was the National Party, now a radical rightist party bent on creating a "flexible" labour market and driving down wages to increase international competitiveness.

The National Party made profound changes to labour legislation, most notably with the Employment Contracts Act of 1991. It replaced the decades-old system characterized by centralized bargaining and interventionist legislation that had been designed to equalize the power balance between employers and unions. The new Act favoured individual contracts over collective contracts: membership in "employee organizations" was entirely voluntary - the word "union" was not even mentioned.

Exclusive rights to represent workers in collective agreements and in grievances was abolished. Workers could be represented by any bargaining agent, or by none at all. Discrimination in employment on the grounds of union membership or non-

membership was prohibited.

From 1984 - 1990, trade unions lost 25 percent of their membership. The pace has accelerated since the 1991 Act. In a country that 12 years ago had a unionization rate of 63 percent, that number is now 24 percent, and falling. In 1995 alone, unions lost 33,000 members. With high unemployment and their numbers dwindling, unions have been forced into impossible bargaining positions. In recent negotiations, seafarers agreed to work 40 percent more hours for the same pay.

The response of the trade union movement moved from the picket line to the International Labour Organization (ILO) to the courts and back to the ballot box. Initially after 1984, with their party in power, unions didn't oppose the economic reforms. By the late 1980s, however, many workers took to the streets in protest. For a short period, strikes were so frequent that New Zealand had the third highest rate of strikes in the industrialized world. The strikes, however, had no effect on the government, and the reforms continued. By the early 1990s, the number of days lost to strikes had drastically declined.

With the economy battered and the traditional supporters of the Labour Party the most bruised, the labour movement was divided. The Council of Trade Unions (CTU) never supported the general strike called for by some trade unionists prior to the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act. Nor has it supported other extra-parliamentary efforts to stop the reforms.

In 1993, the CTU filed a complaint to the ILO against the New Zealand government, alleging serious violations of the principles of freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively. The ILO investigated. Its final report in 1994 glossed over crucial issues and, in the end, mainly restated the positions of the CTU and the government. In the meantime, individual unions were challenging the act in New Zealand courts. The court challenges continue today. The court decisions have provided some greater protection to workers and

their bargaining agents - for example, in forcing employers to bargain with authorized agents.

Since 1989, those unions disillusioned with the Labour Party have supplied activists for a new leftist political grouping - the Alliance. Members of the Alliance campaigned vigorously for a new electoral system. A 1993 referendum threw out the traditional first-past-the-post system in favour of a system of proportional representation. The first national election using the new system will be in October 1996. A coalition government is likely.

Support for the Alliance has been as high as 30 percent, but is now at 10 percent. If it becomes a coalition partner in a new government, the Alliance's chief demand will be to repeal the Employment Contracts Act and restore trade union rights.

Massive Protests in France

France has a long tradition of government intervention in the economy and, since the Second World War, has developed one of the most elaborate social-welfare systems in the world. However, changes loom.

A new Conservative government was elected in 1995. The Maastricht Treaty, the defining document for European integration, aims to introduce liberalization and competitiveness to areas of state monopoly, including post and telecommunications, transportation and energy. The Maastricht criteria for economic and monetary union include public sector deficit control.

In September 1995, Prime Minister Juppe announced a non-negotiable public sector wage freeze. In November, he presented his plan for social welfare reform to the National Assembly, describing it as a program designed to save a welfare system threatened by an accumulated debt of 240 billion francs and an annual deficit of 60 billion francs. The opposition Socialist Party agreed with the plan, but not the pace. The proposed reforms hit hardest at workers, pensioners, and the unemployed.

Public sector unions responded powerfully to the proposed reforms. Transport workers were the nucleus of a public sector general strike that saw, on one day, two million people take to the streets.

The protests began on October 10, 1995, in response to the public sector wage freeze, with a one-day public sector strike that brought France to a halt. Two weeks later, students protested the government's failure to end university overcrowding and underfunding. Then, a month later, the unions took to the streets in response to Juppe's announced plan for social welfare cuts.

With the exception of the post office and railway workers, most unions were on strike for no longer than a day. For many, the lack of a strike fund proved a disincentive to sustained action.

Schools, power supplies, the post office, telecom-

munications and public transport were most affected by the strike. Government offices and hospitals were less affected. Limited work stoppages also occurred in the private sector, with some private banks and insurance companies being shut down temporarily, and with truck drivers blocking roads.

There were creative local protests. In one town, workers bricked up the mayor's office after he denounced them as terrorists.

The strike caused chaos throughout France, but especially in Paris where transportation was paralysed. The giant demonstrations spread throughout the country, with the number of demonstrators reaching two million on December 12. By then, it was clear that the demonstrations were no longer comprised only of trade unionists: the general public was also joining in the marches. Throughout, the strikers and demonstrators enjoyed the support of public opinion, with 62 percent supporting the actions. By December 12, the unions were demanding the complete withdrawal of the Juppe Plan - along with Juppe's resignation.

Shocked by the strength of the opposition and by public support for the unions, the government retreated. It promised not to privatize the railways, agreed to put off plans indefinitely to overhaul the tax system, promised to protect public services from any de-regulation ordered by the European Commission, re-opened wage negotiations in the state-owned coal industry, and pledged an extra 900 million francs for universities. The government also agreed to the unions' demand for a "social summit" to cover jobs, working conditions, pay and welfare reform.

The 1995 strikes may lead to considerable change in France - both in government policy and in trade union organization. For the unions, which represent only 10 percent of the work-force, the strikes appear to have given them new life and observers are now predicting growth in the trade union landscape - both in numbers and in influence.

Phil Johnson works for the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union.



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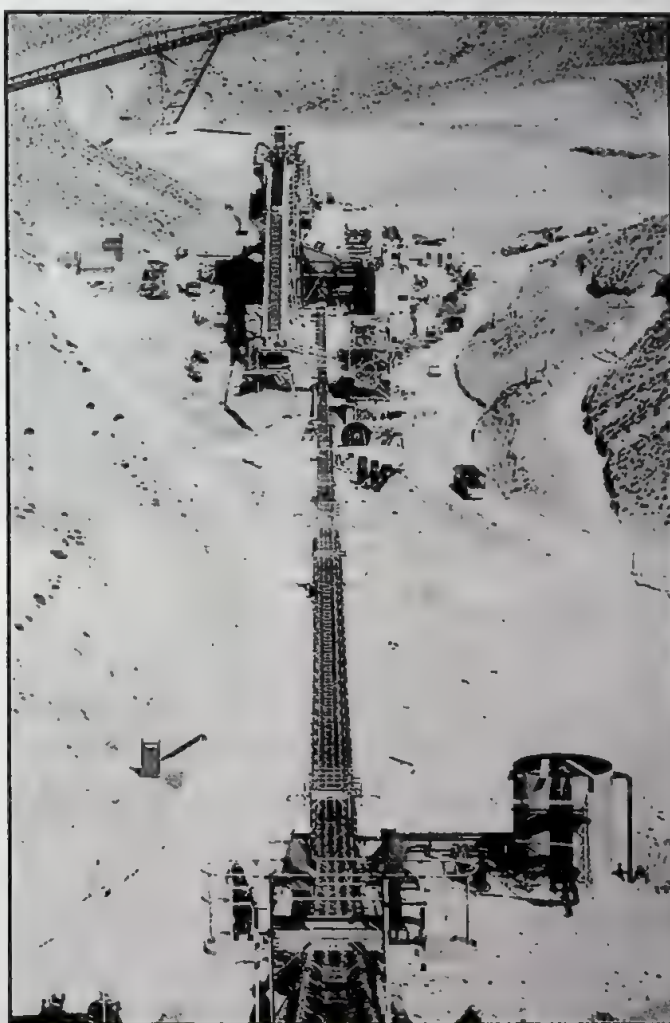
Miners are challenging the new global economic order.

by Gerry LeBlanc

Unions have long recognized the need to communicate within their own organizations as well as with other groups. So what does this mean for unions entering the 21st century in the now widely recognized global economy?

For members of the Canadian Steelworkers, especially those in the mining sector, it means going far beyond previously established bounds. With the rapidly increasing expansion of Canadian mining companies into foreign markets, it has become necessary to establish more thorough and ongoing links with workers in the countries where the Canadian transnationals are setting up shop.

Much of this increased communication has been established through various projects of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund. Since its inception in 1985, the Fund has been forging links between Steelworkers in Canada and worker and community organizations in Asia, Africa and Central and South America.



Cominco mine in Chile.

One country that has seen a great deal of Canadian mining investment in the last few years is Chile. Last year in Santiago, Chile, I met with Moises Lebraña, president of the Chilean Confederation of Miners, who told me that the Confederation had identified 63 Canadian mining-related companies that represented 41 percent of all foreign mining investment in the country.

This is not surprising to many Canadian miners who have been hearing about Chile from the companies at home. Chilean mines have been brought up at bargaining sessions as examples of how "competitive" other operations are in an attempt to wring concessions out of Canadian workers. At the other end are Chilean miners who are hearing partial descriptions of living and working conditions of Canadian miners but who still have many unanswered questions as to how their employers act in Canada.

Many of these questions are starting to be an-

1n Peru,
health and
safety on the
job can mean
just getting
out alive
- if you can.



Walter Silvera / TAFOS

But now, thanks to a partnership between the United Steelworkers Humanity Fund and the Institute of Health and Work in Peru (ISAT), information and technical support are arming Peruvian workers with the tools they need to fight for international safety standards.

It's just one of the ways the Humanity Fund supports the world-wide struggle for decent living and working conditions, human rights, and social justice.

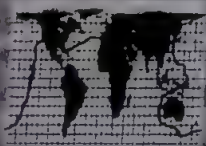
In its second decade of development work with various partners around the world, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund includes direct support for unions and workers' organizations.

As well as projects that deal with basic food security and community development, others are aimed at building the organizational capacity of workers everywhere, through training, workshops, research and social programs.

And for the Canadian Steelworkers who negotiate the Humanity Fund clause into their collective agreements, it still costs only a penny an hour, per member.

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swered as a result of a mining exchange project initiated by the Steelworkers Humanity Fund. The idea behind the project is to put in place a structure that will allow regular channels of communication between mine workers in Canada, South America and southern Africa. The project also allows for direct experience of the different work environments through two-way solidarity visits.

Canadian activists have visited Chile, and Chilean mine workers have made trips to Canada. While most of these visits in the past have been of a fairly general nature, the most recent exchange was much more specific.

In this particular visit, which took place in the fall of 1995, two Chilean union members from mines operated by two Canadian transnational mining companies visited counterpart mines in Ontario and British Columbia. For nearly a month the two shadowed a Steelworker activist on their day to day duties. They attended union meetings, meetings with management, went on safety tours and met rank and file members on the shop floor.

In addition they got a glimpse of the personal life of a Canadian worker by staying in their counterpart's home and taking part in family and recreational activities. There was a chance to discuss virtually every aspect of union work and to compare notes on how their mutual employer works in the different locations. Two Steelworkers will make a similar visit to Chile this fall.

The most important aspect of the visit was the establishment of strong links between the groups. Since their return to Chile, the unions at the two mines have kept up contact with the many friends they now have in Canada who work for the same employer as they do. There have been cases where Chilean workers have asked Canadian workers to protest to their mutual employer over the poor treatment of workers at the Chilean operation.

Anyone who knows a bit of the recent history of Chile can appreciate the difficulty with being a trade union activist in that country. In the 13 years following the 1973 military coup, trade unions were banned and nearly every union leader was jailed, murdered, disappeared or driven into exile. Because of this, the union movement has had to literally rebuild from the ground up in the last ten years since the return of civilian rule. Despite their now legal right to exist, Chilean unions are still under constant attack from the right-wing that controls government and most business in the country.

In talking with the Confederation of Miners last spring, I was told that Canadian companies have been taking the weak position of the Chilean unions into consideration when deciding to operate there.

Hernan Castañeda, an executive member of the Confederation, told me, "I feel these Canadian companies come to Chile intending to break the law." He

also told me of one Canadian company that told the miners that they were causing problems and that if the workers didn't cooperate, the company would go to Peru where they don't have to deal with unions, can pay lower wages, and have the military available to deal with strikes.

Canadian companies claim they go to Chile because it has an "investor friendly environment" with no unnecessary regulations and a low tax base. They never mention the unfriendly worker environment and shun any suggestion that lax environmental standards lure them to countries like Chile. They claim that Chilean environmental standards are as stringent as Canada's in most cases and when they're not, they import the higher Canadian standards when they take their operations south.

Visits to Chile by Steelworkers, and discussions both in Chile and Canada with Chilean miners and environmentalists show discrepancies in the Canadian companies' claims that environmental standards are high in Chile. In my personal observations, I found environmental laws were lacking in many areas, were easily manipulated, and generally unenforceable.

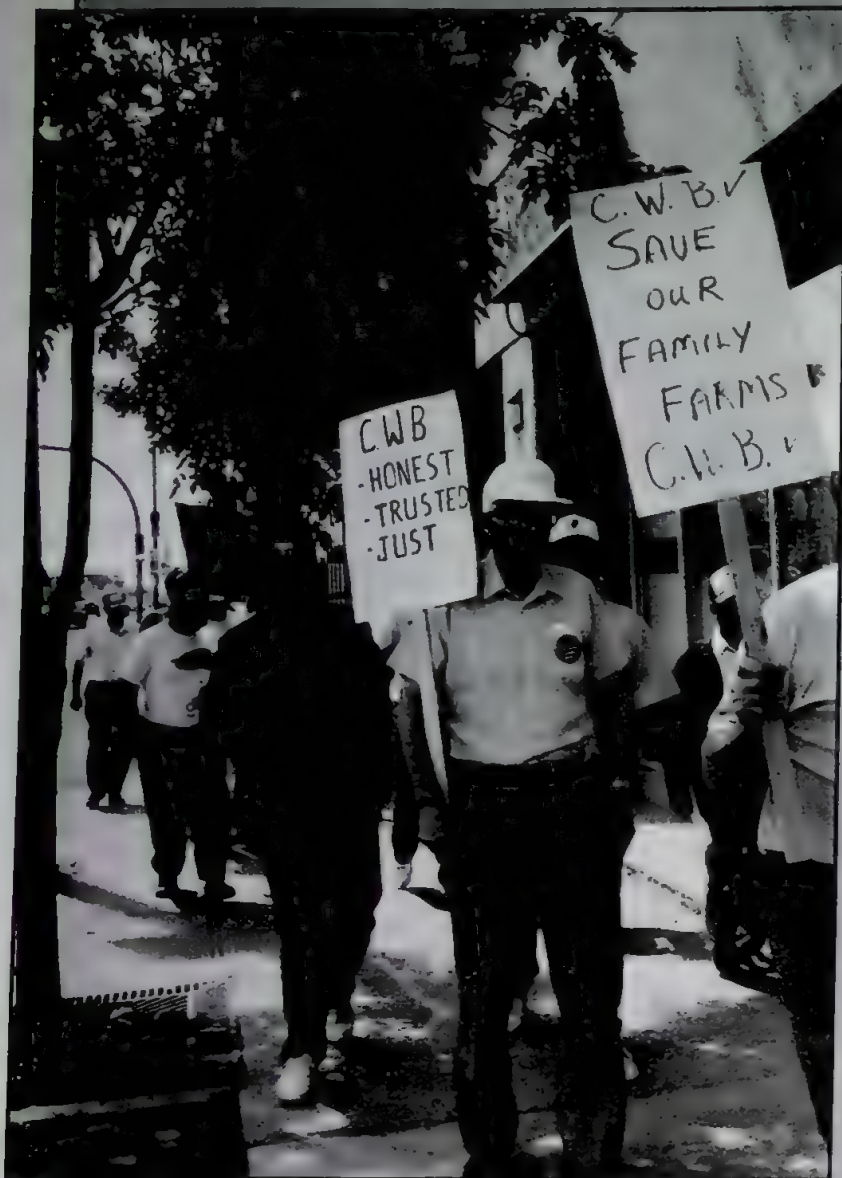
While it may be true that taxes are quite low, this results in the lack of any substantial social safety net such as that funded by tax revenue in Canada.

Canadian workers in other sectors are also aware of their employers' overseas activities and this trend is likely to continue. With the governments of Canada and Chile now deeply entrenched in the process of creating their own free trade agreement, it is likely many more Canadian companies will be eager to take advantage of that "investor friendly environment" being lauded by the mining transnationals.

There are a number of things that can be done, and will have to be done, in order to counter the negative aspects of this steadily expanding globalization. There needs to be serious efforts to work through union consortiums with each member of the consortium contracting to bring something specific to the table. There also has to be coordination between labour and environmentalists and this has to go beyond affirmations to real working links. More specific goals might include targeting specific transnationals and developing global bargaining strategies that attempt to attain "best practice" contract language that will allow gains made in one country to be transferred to another regardless of the second country's poor labour laws or lack of democracy.

With workers learning more about each other through projects such as the mining exchange, there is cause to be optimistic that together, we can mount a strong challenge to corporate globalization.

Gerry LeBlanc is an executive member of the United Steelworkers Local 9113 in Tumbler Ridge, B.C. and an activist with the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.



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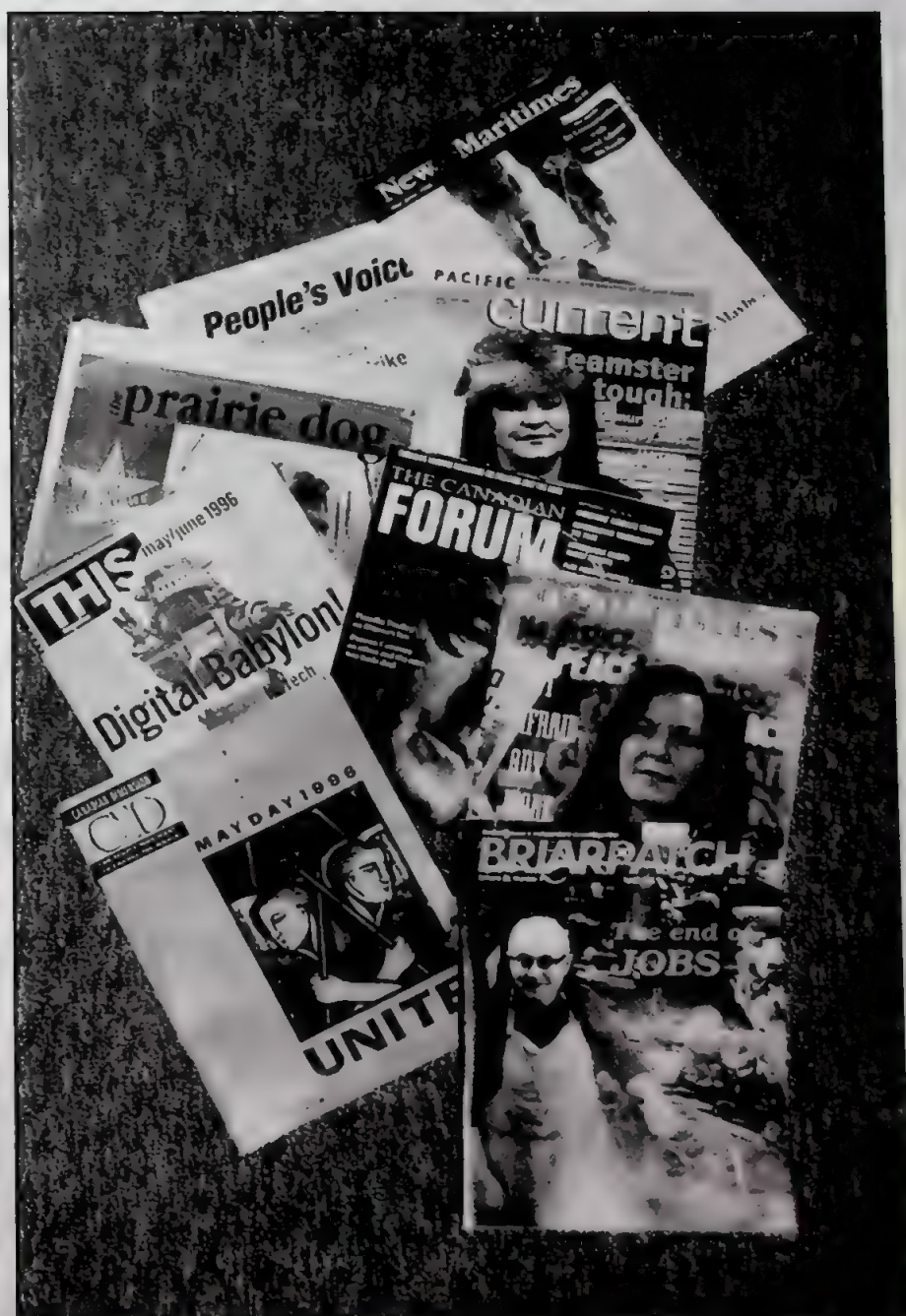
How we can resuscitate our news media and society.

by James Winter

When the late K.C. Irving monopolized all four English-language dailies in New Brunswick in the late 1960s, Liberal bagman Keith Davey responded by heading up a special Senate committee to investigate the mass media. A little more than a decade later, when the Southam and Thomson newspaper chains conspired to close dailies and grant each other monopolies, Tom Kent headed a Royal Commission into news media ownership.

While Senator Davey was retiring from the Senate in the spring of 1996, Conrad Black monopolized all ten daily newspapers in three provinces: five in Saskatchewan, three in Prince Edward Island, and two in Newfoundland. He then took sole control of the Southam chain - the country's largest - by buying out Paul Desmarais of Power Corp. To date, the Chrétien government has not responded.

Nationally, through the Hollinger, Southam and Sterling chains, Black now controls 60 of 104 dailies, and about 43 percent of the nation's circulation. The political response was typified by Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow, who



"Alberta has set the national agenda for Canada"

Jean Charest,
Leader, Federal Progressive Conservative Party

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tried to look on the bright side. He was quoted as saying, "I just don't see Conrad Black picking up the phone to somebody at the *Leader-Post* and saying 'This must be your editorial policy toward the NDP government.'"

Premier Romanow should qualify for the Pollyanna of the year award. While Black wouldn't pick up the phone himself, he began influencing the content of the province's newspapers indirectly a day or so after the purchase closed, by laying-off 25 percent of the employees. Major cuts are coming at Southam, its news service, the Canadian Press, and Broadcast News services where Black now has a dominant voice.

This is but one of the means by which news media owners influence content: fewer employees mean an inferior news product. But it is their appointments to the top positions - the publishers - which trickle down through the news organization, affecting hiring, promotions, assignments, focus, editing, re-writing, and so forth. Additionally, "firing chill" means that reporters will second-guess what will please the boss and keep them working.

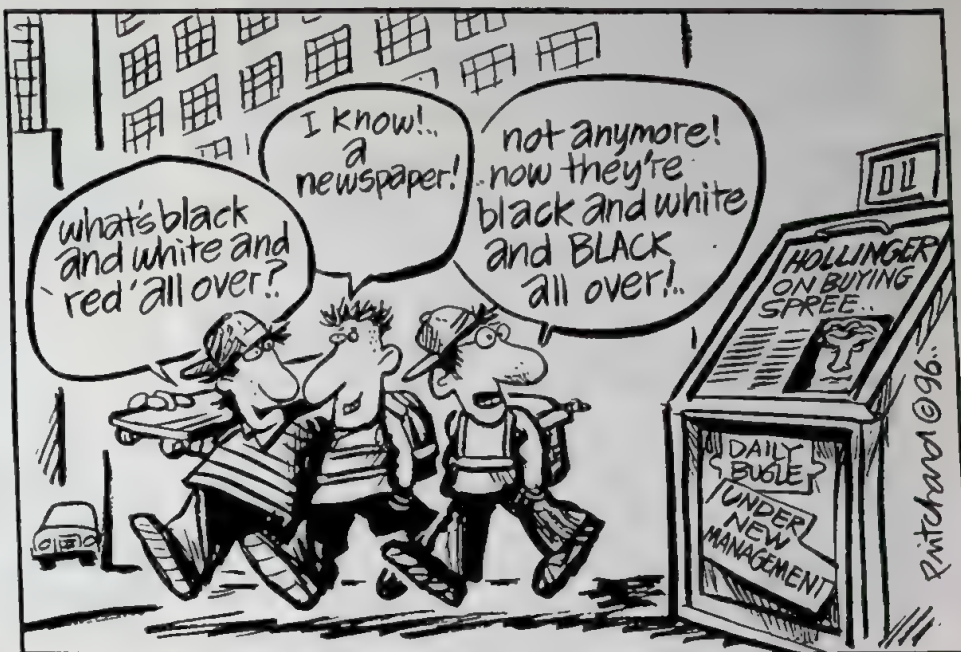
Black's ownership is particularly troubling for a number of reasons. Unlike Kenneth Thomson, Black is a "hands on" publisher who is actively involved in his own brand of journalism. While Thomson is notoriously stingy, Black is ruthless, as the former *Armadale* reporters discovered in Saskatchewan. His political views are notoriously conservative. He craves political influence and has admitted he uses his newspapers for that purpose.

As the summer began, conversations turned to what could be done about the obscene level of control Black holds over the news. The problems are so ingrained and widespread that any solutions are either quite intimidating in their scope, or seemingly futile. An example of the latter was provided by the Kent Commission report in 1981. Its authors attempted to patch up some problems in media ownership with bandaied solutions, and it failed when it fell victim to the broader political forces which were beyond their mandate.

For example, it is widely held that Canadians live in a democracy, but the truth is that it more closely resembles an autocracy. By virtue of deciding who will be in the caucus, the cabinet, and the senior civil service, all of whom sit at his or her pleasure, the prime minister literally runs the country. This opens up the possibility for abuse, either by the leader, or by whoever influences them.

Thus the overriding problem we face is that we do

not have a system of responsible government, in the sense that politicians and leaders are not responsible to the public. Rather, they are beholden to the corporations, power brokers and lobbyists. In 1994, a non-election year, this bunch contributed about



\$6 million to the federal Liberal Party coffers.

Our notion of "democracy" is in reality a system of elite decision-making. According to the rules, the public is almost entirely reduced to the role of spectators, with allowance for a periodic ratification of the elite rulers every four or five years.

As Michael Lind, senior editor at *Harper's* magazine summed things up, in the American context: "Because the same economic oligarchy subsidizes almost all of our politicians, our political fights are as inconsequential as TV wrestling."

In the Canadian context, according to former Trudeau cabinet minister Jim Fleming, "It's a bit scary. People are so proud to think that we have such a democracy. But relatively few people control the economic levers. They're not bad guys, they're just taking care of their interests," he said. "We're back to the Old Boys' Club."

Legitimate Reform

We are sadly in need of reforms which will democratize our political system. We require a system of recall, whereby constituents may vote to recall their elected representative if that person no longer protects their interests. This will help to make politicians accountable to the public rather than the corporations. Changes must be made to make governments less hierarchical and more democratic, with shared responsibilities and decision-making. We require a system of proportional representation, which will make for a "messier" and less efficient but

far more democratic system. As it now stands, "majority" governments are often elected by a minority of the popular vote. Candidates should be nominated by party riding associations, with no exceptions, and the party leader should not be able to overrule the riding. Cabinet ministers and committee chairpersons should be elected rather than appointed. No members of parliament should be beholden to the prime minister for their job or perks.

Until these political changes are made, little can be accomplished regarding the corporate media. For example, the federal Anti-Combines Act, the Bureau of Competition Policy, and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission should all intervene in the undue concentration of ownership in the news media. It is not in the public interest for one corporation to control all of the daily press in even a single province, let alone two or three. Yet, these bodies and government legislation are of no help to citizens because the policy makers are beholden to their corporate funders. The most we could expect to happen under the current system is that a Royal Commission would be set up, which would hold hearings, conduct research, write a report, and languish in obscurity thereafter.

Another Royal Commission is unlikely to be fruitful. In fact it would prove diversionary, as with the Kent Report, a cathartic venting of frustration which wound up ignored on the shelf. The \$3 million that report cost is a lot to pay for an (albeit excellent) journalism textbook - one which the government has allowed to go out of print. As Kent and Jim Fleming (who tried to introduce a Canada Newspaper Act and was subsequently tossed out of Trudeau's cabinet) demonstrated, tinkering with the media falls victim to the very political and economic forces which are being ignored. In this sense, such an initiative would be diversionary and more harmful than helpful.

If we cannot rely on "our" lawmakers, what can we do? The Anti-Combines Legislation was toothless at the time of the Kent Commission and is even more so now. The Council of Canadians and others are investigating a Media Watch organization, which would help tremendously. No political change can be accomplished without public education to publicize current shortcomings. As Ed Finn of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has commented, we need a "concerted, comprehensive, ongoing long-term communications program that reaches down to the grass roots." According to Finn, "There is only one way to win the war of words. That is to make it the number one priority, devise a workable communications-cum-education strategy and then commit whatever is needed in financial and human resources to make it work."

We can only do this if we have our own local and national news media. Not just monthlies, but weeklies and eventually dailies, television, cable and

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DROP IN SOON!

radio stations as well. Impossible?

Here's one suggestion: The Action Canada Network is an umbrella organization for five million members, through its affiliated organizations such as the Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Council of Canadians, the teachers' federations, and so forth. If we could arrange for a monthly dues checkoff of just one dollar from each of those people, we would have \$60 million annually to put towards a progressive, national daily newspaper.

The newspaper could employ progressive young writers and operate through an editorial board, and at arms-length from the unions who raise the funding. The labour movement forms the second largest newspaper ownership group in Sweden, with almost 20 percent of national circulation. There is no reason why the working people in this country cannot have one daily newspaper.

There are problems. We need to embark on an education program to develop the political will on the part of both the union leadership and their membership. We need to fundraise. All of the union dues collected by all of the unions in this country in a given year amount to less than the profits of a single corporation such as the Royal Bank of Canada. But despite these and other problems, the unions and social activist organizations represent our greatest hope for developing a balancing force against rampant corporatism.

The major problem here is public misperceptions which are due to media mythology. We have been effectively brainwashed about what is going on around us, and even about ourselves: our achievements, responsibilities, and human potential. The public can effect change, can achieve a just and equitable society, once it is aware of the problems and the need for change, and the fact that changes are both desirable and achievable. There is a tremendous amount of collective wisdom and potential power in the hands of the public, ready to be released once that public is free from the cognitive limitations of the current system. So, the first step is education. To accomplish this we need to work with the mainstream media and educational systems, as well as working around them.

We can reach out to progressive journalists and encourage and assist them in their contributions to our collective struggle. Get to know them. Call them with story ideas, encouragement and constructive criticism.

Likewise, we can hammer neoconservative and neoliberal journalists with criticisms, via the letters pages. We can read critically, write letters, write columns, call in to polls and radio talk-back numbers and programs, or form a support group for intellectual self-defence. We can join social justice coalitions, and arrange meetings with editorial boards

to get our views across. We can demonstrate, boycott media, and boycott advertisers. In short, we can get active and go public.

Then there are the alternative media. Between \$18 and \$24 a year will buy a subscription to *Briarpatch*, *Canadian Dimension*, *Canadian Forum*, *This Magazine*, *Our Times*, *Peace*, *New Internationalist*, and many others. By comparison, *The Globe and Mail* costs about \$264 a year. So subscribe. Even students can afford this.

Support the CBC. Lobby for the public sphere. In addition, jobless communications or journalism graduates might start up a print or web site Canadian version of the *Utne Reader*, a monthly with the best articles reprinted from the alternative media.

Another idea is to create a World Wide Web site for alternatives, as we have done here at the University of Windsor (Browse our website at: <http://www.uwindsor.ca/newsstnd/flipside/index.htm>).

We can organize and host a national conference on media and political reforms, inviting alternative journalists, publishers, activists in labour and social movements, with the express purpose of addressing and initiating options. We can bandy about ideas with anyone who will listen and even some who won't. You have the power to turn off spectator sports.

NEWS FLASH!

On October 31, 1993 Federated Co-operatives closed its Regina Distribution Centre leaving 120 dedicated long-term employees without jobs. An arbitrator recently ordered the Co-operative to re-employ and fully compensate the majority of those workers. Congratulations to the members of Local 540 in their unprecedented victory.



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We can follow up the above suggestions with the Action Canada Network and unions. We can lobby the CRTC about public access to cable stations, and get on the air; take over student newspapers and radio stations and dedicate them to progressive causes; write to progressively-minded leaders in labour, women's movements, education, government, and elsewhere, to suggest solutions and to ask for help.

These are just a few possibilities. Once more people recognize the systemic problems, we may begin to seriously examine the democratic means for improving our society. Obviously, long-term goals such as equality, social justice, and serious reform of our political, economic and social systems, require sustained time and effort. The first step is a con-

certed effort towards education to counteract the massive brainwashing by the mainstream corporate media, in which we are all steeped. More broadly, we are in dire need of serious political changes in this country, aimed at representative and democratic government; changes which are constantly asphyxiated by the corporate news media's stranglehold on democracy's oxygen: our information, ideas and public debate.

James Winter is a professor of communication studies at the University of Windsor. This article is adapted from Democracy's Oxygen: How the News Media Smother the Facts, published in the summer of 1996 by Black Rose Books of Montreal and available from the University of Toronto Press.

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1997 ETAN CALENDAR

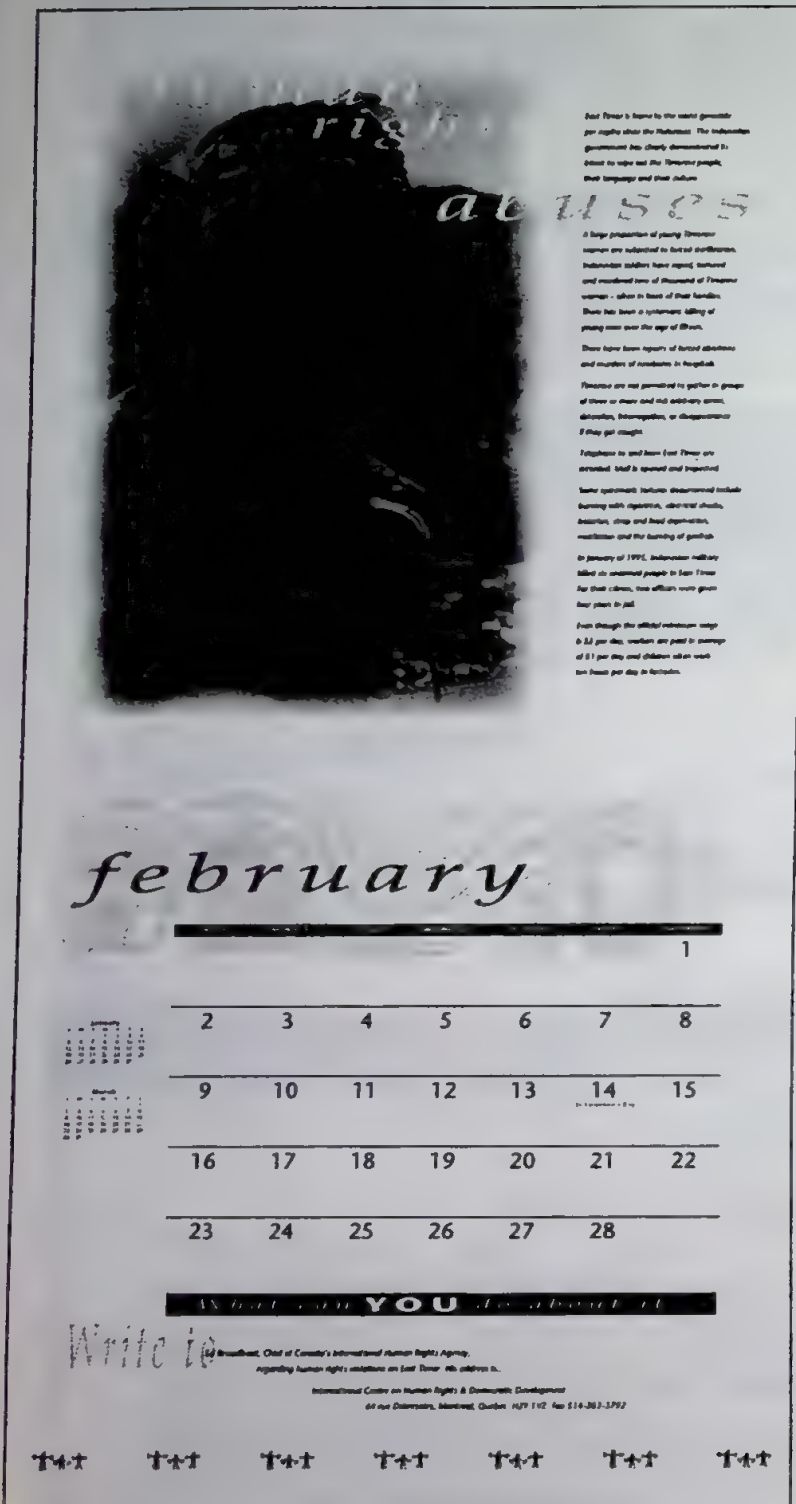
The East Timor Alert Network (ETAN) in Winnipeg has put together a 1997 calendar for educational and fund-raising purposes. ETAN is committed to raising awareness of the illegal Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor.

The calendar has been professionally designed by June Derksen, a graphic artist currently working with a Winnipeg design studio. The writing was done primarily by Louise Chernetz, a Winnipeg activist. The photographs were taken by Elaine Briere, a Vancouver photo-journalist who visited East Timor in April of 1974. Her photo essay on village life before the Indonesian invasion has been used extensively by human rights and solidarity groups around the world.

Measuring 12" x 12" flat, the calendar is printed on excellent quality paper, two colours, and with duotone photographs. Each month will feature a different photograph and a short article on various topics, such as:

- Human Rights Abuses
- Trade
- Unions (The ETAN National Solidarity Project)
- The Role of the Church
- Parliamentarians for East Timor
- Military Aid
- Refugees in Canada
- The Dili Massacre
- The Peace Process

As well, each month will have a "How can YOU respond?" action component related to the topic. The inside cover features a map, an overview of the history of East Timor, and the addresses of ETAN groups across Canada. As well, there is a resource list for those wanting to do further study.



Calendars will be sold for \$12 each, \$10 each for quantities of 6 or more and \$8 each for 12 or more.

Postage will be extra. Orders can be mailed to:

ETAN/ Winnipeg, 167 North Hill Drive, Wpg., Man. R2E 0H7.

Orders can also be placed by phone at (204) 663-2688 and (204) 775-5508 or by fax at (204) 661-5776.

Please indicate your name, address, postal code, phone no. and quantity.

Cheques should be made payable to ETAN/Winnipeg.

If groups are interested in selling calendars on a consignment basis, please contact us at the above.

For more information call Bev at (204) 663-2688.

Unfair Shares:
Corporations and Taxation
in Canada
 published by The Ontario
 Coalition for Social Justice
 and The Ontario Federation of
 Labour,
 15 Gervais Drive, Don Mills,
 ON M3C 1Y8, 1996.

reviewed by George Manz

The mainstream media and
 most politicians are constantly

complaining about high taxes and
 the need to tighten our belts an-
 other notch. Federal and provin-
 cial slash-and-burn governments
 are attacking everything in their
 attempts to lower the debt and
 deficit: unemployment insurance,
 welfare, health, education.

But the real culprits for our
 current fiscal mess are rarely
 mentioned: corporations that pay
 little or no taxes. *Unfair Shares*
 provides the reader with easily
 accessible information on a wide
 range of topics that activists can
 use to fight the right-wing agenda.

One section lists about 450
 corporations that pay little or no
 corporate income tax. Each one
 pays a lower rate of tax than the
 average working person. For ex-
 ample, Canadian Pacific had a pre-
 tax profit of \$720,200,000 in 1994
 but only paid 4.2 percent income
 tax. Potash Corp. of Saskatche-
 wan had a pre-tax profit of
 \$132,849,000, yet it contributed
 only 3.7 percent to the public cof-
 fers. Renaissance Energy had a
 profit of over \$116 million but didn't
 contribute a dime in taxes.

Another section lists 326 cor-
 porations that owe at least \$5
 million in deferred taxes. These
 include BCE Inc. - \$2.025 billion,
 Canadian Pacific - \$1.82 billion,

Cominco - \$305 million, General
 Motors of Canada - \$148 million,
 Hollinger Inc. - \$113 million,
 Imperial Oil - \$1.227 billion, IPSCO
 - \$31 million, MacMillan Bloedel -
 \$231 million, Rogers Communi-
 cations - \$283 million, and Shell
 Canada - \$867 million.

This booklet also gives us the
 names and incomes of the CEOs
 who call the shots in these corpo-
 rations: people like Frank Stro-
 nach of Magna International, who
 "earned" over \$40 million in com-
 pensation in 1994. Hollinger's
 Conrad Black pulled in \$2.5 mil-
 lion that year while IPSCO's Roger
 Phillips received a "mere" \$705,000.
 Others on the list include Methanex
 Corp. boss Brian Hannan with over
 \$12 million and Potash Corp. of
 Saskatchewan's Charles Childers
 with a cool \$3.9 million.

The 50 richest Canadians are
 listed as well. Kenneth R. Thom-
 son leads the list with a net worth
 of \$8.2 billion. The billionaire's
 club also includes the Irving fam-
 ily, Charles Bronfman, the Eaton
 family, Ted Rogers, W. Galen
 Weston, the McCain brothers, and
 Paul Desmarais. The millionaire's
 club includes Robert Friedland of
 Diamond Fields Resources (\$376.8
 million) and Conrad Black (\$302.6
 million). There's even one person

from Sas-
 katchewan:
 Fred Hill,
 whose net
 worth is listed
 as \$160 mil-
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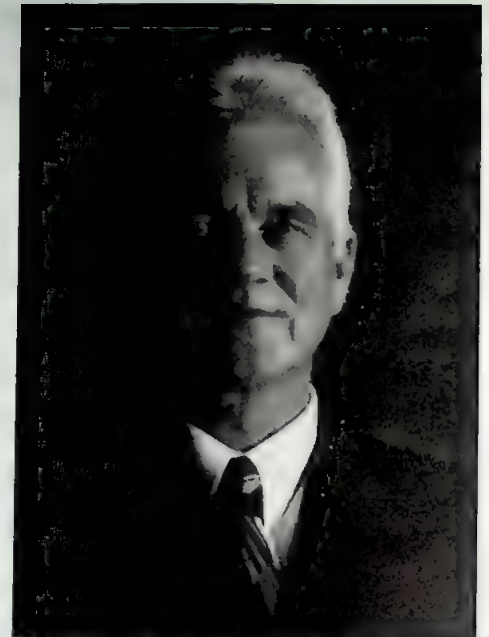
GIVE ME MORE

"No, I'm not worth \$25 million a year, damn it. I'm worth at least twice that!"

- Ted Newall,
Nova Corp. CEO.



day one...



MINIMUM WAGE MAN

"If I added up all the hours I've spent working over the past 40 years, I probably haven't made much more than the minimum wage."

- Frank Stronach,
former CEO of the
Canadian auto-parts
maker Magna
International. Stronach
recently made \$43.2
million a year in salary
and stock options. At the
current highest minimum
wage in Canada (\$7 an
hour in B.C.), it would
take Stronach - even if
he could work 24 hours
a day every day of the
year - 688 years to earn
\$43.2 million.

HEARTS OF GOLD

"I don't think that with the prominence of these corporations that we're going to see anybody say 'Hey Ralph, come on, I contributed to your conference, now you owe me.'"

- Ralph Klein,
premier of Alberta, after the
provincial government decided to
accept about \$100,000 from
corporations to help pay for the
premiers conference.

SCROOGE

"There goes the Christmas presents."
- Larry Smith, CFL commissioner, after agreeing to take a 7.5 percent wage cut from his \$250,000 a year salary to try to save the league.



GET SHORTY

"Alex Mandl will be the highest-paid American under seven feet tall. He makes Shaquille O'Neal look like a piker."

- Hal Burlingame,

AT&T's human-resources chief. Mandl recently resigned as AT&T's president to join Associated Communication LLC, a private firm in Washington, DC. Mandl received a reported US\$20 million signing bonus. He stands to make up to \$300 million more in other forms of company benefits.

NO TEARS

"I wouldn't see any value of going on TV and crying."

- Bob Allen,

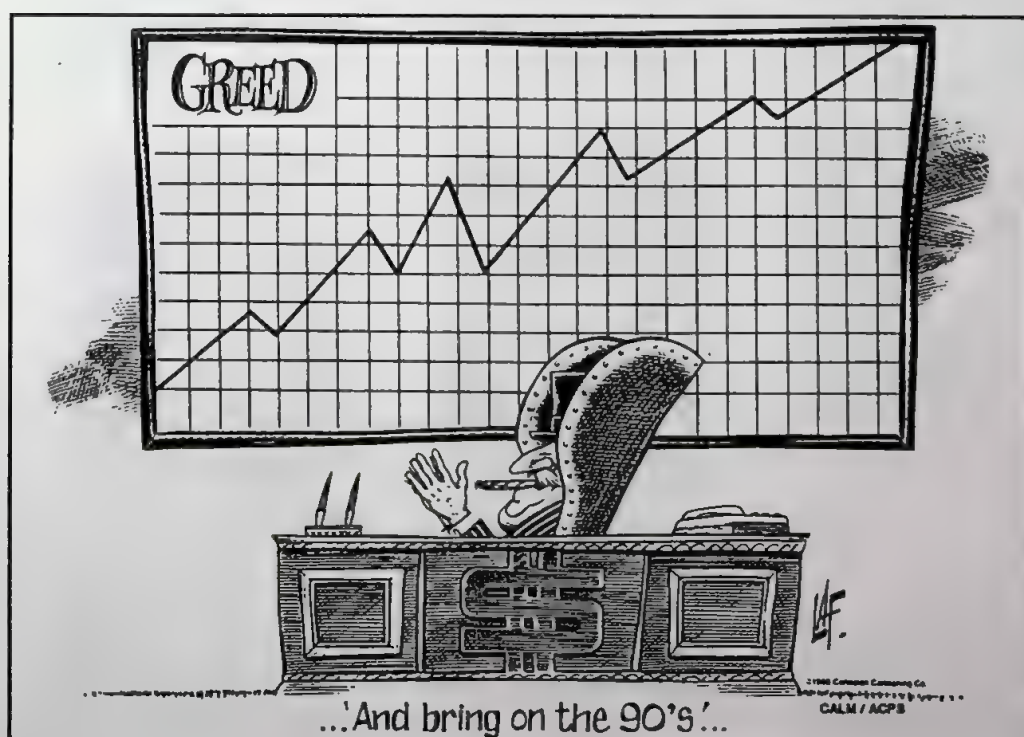
AT&T CEO, on why he's not apologizing for laying off 40,000 workers from his highly profitable company.

THEY'RE NOT SLAVES

"We do so much for these communities. We provide so many jobs. Why should we be nailed when we actually contribute so much to the economy. Our system is beautiful. They're not slaves."

- Aldo Mauro,

one of the co-owners of Screaming Tale restaurants in Belleville and Port Hope, Ontario, after hiring "volunteer" workers who work for no pay, only tips.



LOYALTY

"The most loyal employees in the world are wasted, and at risk, if they are working for a company that is not making as much money as it possibly can."

- Terence Corcoran,

Globe and Mail columnist, July 24, 1996, the day after Sears Canada laid off 1,200 employees.



ALTERNATIVES is Canada's foremost environmental journal since 1971. Thought-provoking articles go beyond band-aid solutions to consider concrete alternatives for a wide range of environmental issues. Look to *Alternatives* for reports of environmental happenings, provocative opinion pieces, and reviews of the latest eco-books.



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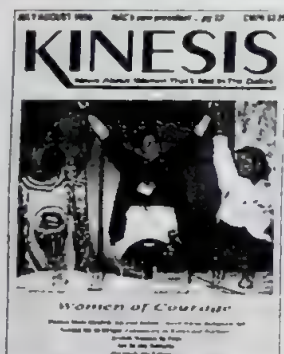
Principled. Radical. Independent. For over 30 years, **CANADIAN DIMENSION** has been a place where activists can debate issues, share information, recount our victories and evaluate our strategies for social change. Our pages are open to all progressive voices – debate makes the movement stronger. And it makes for lively reading!



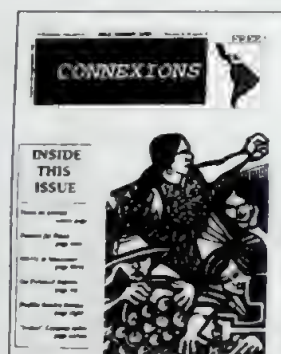
"... savvy, articulate... a fresh perspective." - *The Globe and Mail*. In its 20th year, **FUSE** continues to offer a dynamic crossover of artistic, social and political concerns that span the gamut from race and representation to gay/lesbian politics, from the effects of pop culture outside the mainstream to cultural nationalism, and more.



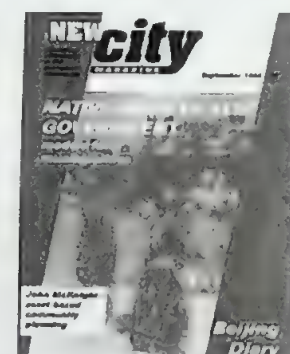
As Canada's largest national feminist magazine, **HERIZONS** explores women's health issues, the law, work and culture, and entices readers with provocative reviews and columnists. Unabashedly feminist, *Herizons* is written in a way that is relevant to the daily lives of women. Canada's much-needed answer to *Ms.*



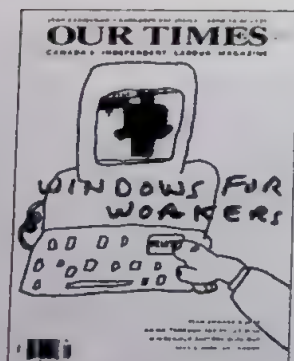
An indispensable news source and Canada's foremost feminist newspaper, **KINESIS** takes you where the dailies don't bother going. Through investigative reports, timely interviews, cultural affairs and national/international news, *Kinesis* provides a fresh look at what women are thinking – and doing – about their lives.



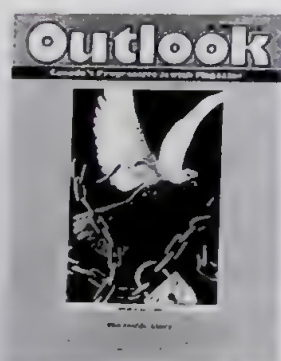
LATIN AMERICA CONNEXIONS/ CONEXION LATINA provides commentary on the struggle for peace and justice in Latin America, and promotes a continent-wide, internationalist vision. This bilingual publication includes current accurate analysis of Latin American events, and information about resources, campaigns and organizations.



NEW CITY MAGAZINE believes in a distinct and sustainable Canadian urban culture and identity. Featuring articles, stories and histories about the city and its people, it is a critical forum on the modern city. *New City* strives to build a better understanding of urban maladies and the possibilities for change.



OUR TIMES is Canada's pro-labour magazine. Each issue features voices of union and community activists across the country who are concerned with the welfare of workers. *Our Times* is an excellent educational resource for those interested in labour issues. Don't miss out! Published six times a year.



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RUNGH means colour. *Rungh* is a forum of critical commentary exploring contemporary culture and politics abroad and at home. *Rungh* negotiates with a culture made out of the dilemmas, hopes and differences between the struggle against racism and other social movements for dignity, well being and emancipation.



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GREEN TEACHER is a forum for teachers and parents seeking to promote environmental and global awareness among young people from K to 12. It offers perspectives on the role of education in creating a sustainable future, practical cross-curricular activities, reviews of the latest teaching resources, and successful ideas from green educators.



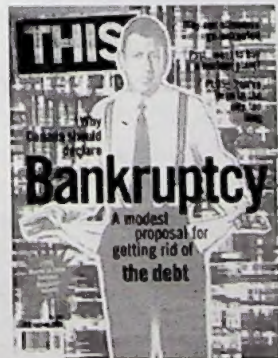
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The Ethics of Being an Ethical Conserver

Where you spend your money is just as important as how you earn it.

by Victor Lau

Most, if not all of us, have the desire to earn our living by working at a job that not only gives us personal satisfaction, but also produces positive benefits for society.

While we try our best to find positive jobs, it's also important to support those businesses that create good jobs. First, we should examine our own workplace or employer. Does it create positive jobs? If not, why not?

An employer who cares only for more and more profits usually places their employees at the bottom of the priority list. If this description fits your workplace, then consider not supporting it. By not spending your money at your own workplace, you begin to help their competitors which in turn weakens your employer. This of course is the ultimate sacrifice which could lead to personal unemployment. But such is the life of being an ethical conserver.

The choice to be an ethical conserver is not an easy task. Nothing is ethically pure. No matter what we do we cannot escape doing some harm to something. The trick is not to escape, but to realize that everything we do has an effect on ourselves, our society, and our planet, so we can begin to make wise choices.

Making wise choices involves learning as much as you can about the issues you care about. For example, if you are a supporter of or a member of a union, then one

choice you can make is to shop only at unionized businesses. If a restaurant or store you frequent is not unionized, consider signing them up. If a union isn't needed, then continued patronage of that business is probably still justifiable. But be sure to make inquiries and ask employees about their conditions of work. If you hear something you don't like, complain to the manager and make sure he or she understands that your continued business depends on fostering positive workplace conditions.

Other suggestions include shopping at co-ops which are democratically controlled and owned by their members. Every member is allowed only one vote regardless of the number of shares they hold. Unlike private or public corporations, co-ops are based on principles of working together, not competing. This is not to say that co-ops are perfect businesses. Some are anti-union, while others seem more inclined to stagnate in the endless search for profits rather than looking to build supportive communities.

It's often easier to shop at Wal-Mart for your family needs. But is this good to do? I would argue it's not. Wal-Mart is not a local business; it is based in the U.S. and therefore ships our money (their profits) back across the border.

Keeping your dollars at home ensures your money is re-used in the local economy. For this reason



shopping at home-based businesses that are small and employee-owned, makes a lot of sense. By doing this you generate jobs in your own community.

How about your savings? I wouldn't recommend a bank. Banks are big money makers and money lenders. They are in the business of making mega-profits for their shareholders. If this means laying off bank tellers, increasing service charges, or lending money to Third World dictators, banks will do so.

Credit unions offer a better alternative. Not only are they owned and controlled democratically, they are also compelled to lend only within their provincial boundaries. This ensures your savings are being used in the local economy. You can even get involved in shaping its policies by attending annual meetings and putting forward your ideas.

We are not powerless. We can make choices that produce more good than harm. By being ethical conservers rather than just consumers, we can save jobs, save the environment, and save future generations from despair.

Victor Lau is an avid ethical conservers advocate who wants to empower the masses. He is also president of the Regina & District Labour Council.

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